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No. 747
Friday
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REACH FOR THE SKY

THE RAF BENEVOLENT FUND'S BATTLE OF BRITAIN 50TH ANNIVERSARY APPEAL

Antoni Gronowicz' 'Garbo - Her Story' reveals the star in such unexpected and intimate detail that she tried to have it banned.

It is an extraordinary story. And it starts this Sunday, August 5 only in The Sunday Telegraph. Garbo. The story she tried to ban.

The Sunday Telegraph

Gnome

THE ATTEMPT to whip up a scandal over my innocent proposals to buy PowerGen has deeply saddened me.

The Government had long ago decided to return PowerGnome (as it will be called) to the private sector, and what could be more private than a deal with an old friend like myself?

The ideology of privatisation has always been one of handing over industry to the small investor. To give PowerGnome to a small investor of £1.5 billion like myself is entirely consistent.

The most hurtful accusation against the Gnomeson Trust ("In Her We Trust") is that of "the sleaze factor". This is of course a reference to the modest £15m fee that is inevitable in the process of effectively underwriting a competitive tender in *[Strobes: get our City people to fill in some guff here]*

To call this professional transaction between government and industry "a bribe" or "a sweetener" is absurd.

One might as well use such terms to describe the large sums of money my company pays to the Conservative Party each year.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnomeson
Hanson Profit
Nr Great Assets
Strip.

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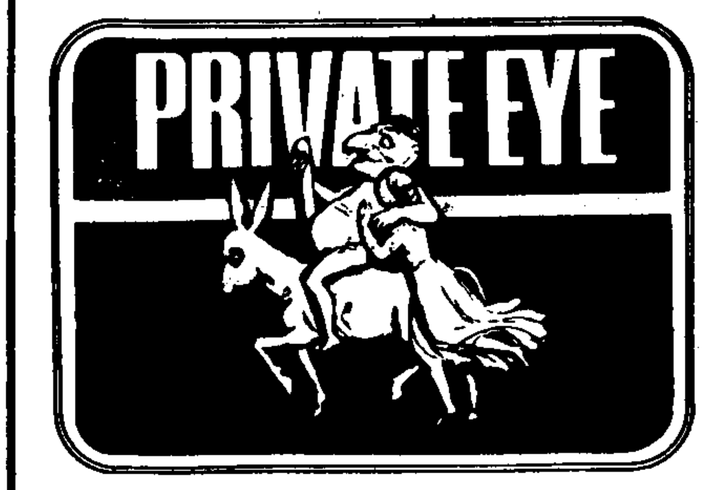


COLOUR SECTION

JOHN WAKEHAM, the energy secretary, has done a Ridley: he has attended a secret lunch with leading City figures and spelled out what he really thinks about electricity privatisation and the environment.

He went, without civil service advice, to stockbrokers Kitkat and Aitken to tell leading investment figures just why they should buy electricity shares.

When they said they were worried about the greenhouse effect damaging the industry by forcing it to spend money on cleaning up its operations, Wakeham scorned the idea. Surely they didn't believe all that nonsense about the climate? he asked.

When they replied that they did, he reassured them (according to the respected journal, *Electrical Review*) that it would take at least two or three years before anything had to be done. They should therefore presumably buy shares and sell them as soon as possible and take a quick profit before the pollution hit the fan.

Thus did the City receive a lesson in patriotism from one of Her Majesty's ministers — so much for investing in the future of a great industry and of the nation.

See: Business News

NOT SINCE the notorious Ronan Point council tower block "progressively" collapsed in 1968 killing five people, has there been such a panic about safety in council blocks.

The fire in which a woman died at Merry Hill Court, Smethwick, West Midlands, on Friday 13 July has been well-reported; but the council there — and indeed councils everywhere — are hoping its implications will be kept well away from the public gaze.

As the *Eye* reported in August 1968, Ronan Point collapsed because no one had thought about the danger of huge blocks of concrete resting on each other with only their weight to hold them. After the *Eye*'s exposé and a public inquiry, the problem was recognised and a huge programme was undertaken to "tie" the blocks to each other with steel.

The problem at Merry Hill Court was equally simple. The block was built according to fire regulations, each floor secured by fire-resistant concrete. The theory is that a fire on any floor should be contained by the fire-resistant concrete, enabling those on the floors above or below to escape. However, the regulations had been by-passed in one crucial respect: holes had been made in the concrete to carry gas pipes.

The holes, to be secure, should be grouted into the concrete. But they weren't: they were crudely boxed in with hardboard. The fire thus rushed upwards for two storeys of the tower block and heat-flaked lumps of concrete from the front panels of the building fell into the courtyard below, narrowly missing the crowds who had gathered there.

This fantastic negligence has been reported, though not extensively. What has not been reported is that Smethwick council knew perfectly well about these defects but was prevented by lack of funds and government building legislation from doing anything about them.

In recent years there has been a series of fires at Merry Hill Court, which for some reason seems to have caught the attention of an arsonist. Two years ago Rita Clarke was pulled out of a corridor window on the 12th floor, suffocating with smoke from a fire on the 4th floor. As recently as this January another arson attack ruined the ninth floor. Smoke poured through the holes in the slabs all the way up the block. The fire brigade swarmed over the building for days; there was a thorough fire inspection and the defective holes were identified. Nothing was done about them.

Like so many councils, Smethwick has no money to do such work. What money it has, from, for instance, the sale of land or council houses, it is forbidden by the Government from spending on housing improvements. Indeed, the area round Merry Hill Court was due to be redeveloped some years ago and the houses improved — until yet another restrictive local government bill (prompted as usual by the construction industry lobby) stopped the council from spending money in this way.

If there are holes in fire-resistant slabs in old council tower blocks all over Britain (as seems likely), disasters like Merry Hill Court will happen again and again. The consequences could be far more terrible than at Smethwick, where the former residents of Merry Hill Court were not encouraged by the fact that the fire brigade had only one turntable ladder that could reach the fire; and that the internal high-pressure water was out of action thanks to vandals.

HAS ANY *Eye* reader in the property market ever heard of a property tycoon being paid *in advance* for a development? Such is the good fortune of dynamic David Goldstone and his Regalian Properties.

Normally payments are made in stages while work progresses, the initial money coming from the company itself or being borrowed from a bank. Astonishingly the Government-owned Property Services Agency has turned this procedure on its head by shelling out £90m of public money to Regalian to develop a four-acre site next to Vauxhall Bridge.

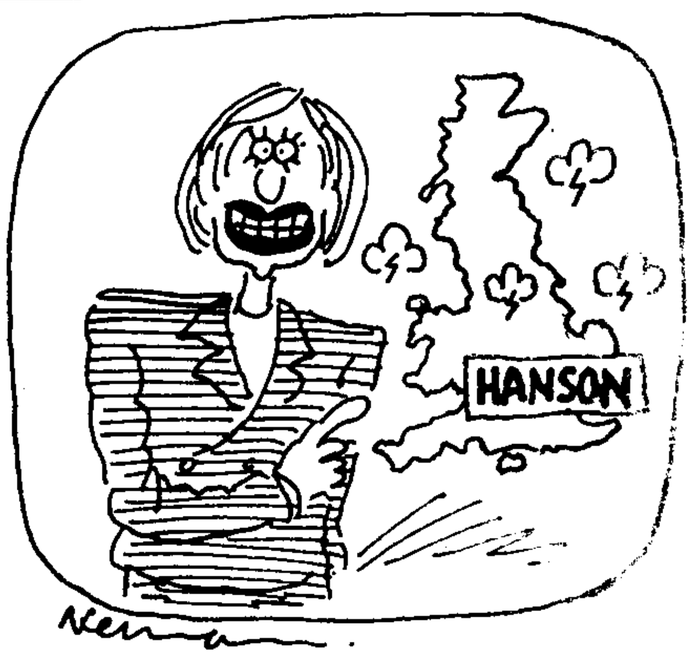
In these hard times for developers the cash has greatly helped Regalian, whose many Docklands flats (Regalian is the biggest developer there of new homes-for-clones) have been held at very high prices, starting at around £200,000.

The £90m has gone straight into the bank where it is earning interest of about £11m a year. Regalian's profits for the last recorded year were exactly £11m. Without that interest the company and its thrusting chairman would be in a rather different position.

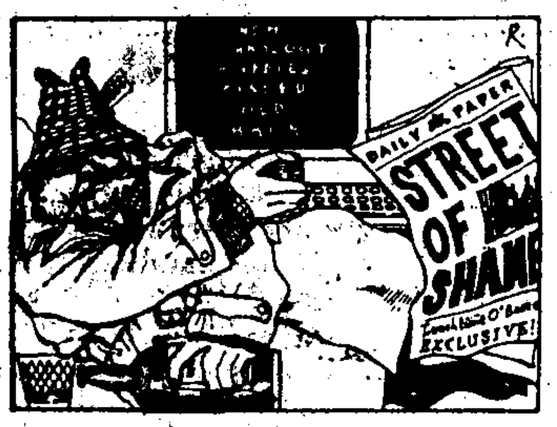
Goldstone became a favourite of the Government and the Tory Party when he struck a deal with Wandsworth council in the early 1980s to buy a run-down block of flats which the council had built for its less wealthy inhabitants.

The council transferred the tenants of the block (which has a nice view of the Thames at Battersea). Goldstone did it up, changed its name to Yuppy Towers and made a handsome profit.

FACT: The new Goldstone inhabitants (unlike their predecessors) mainly vote Tory.



"This political storm is brought to you in association with PowerGen"



THE tabloids were in a lather of righteous indignation over the betting "coup" on the new Archbish of Cant, George Carey. Both the *Sun* and the *Star* made it their front-page splash last Thursday.

"Is nothing sacred?" screamed the *Sun*. "Who would have thought that anyone could have dreamed of making a fast buck on the next Archbishop of Canterbury?"

The answer to the question is simple: hacks. The announcement from Downing Street reached most newsdesks before 10am on Wednesday, but it was embargoed until 11am. Shortly before 10 o'clock there was a flurry of large bets on George Carey, as hacks raced out of their offices and into the nearest branch of Ladbrokes.

Soon afterwards, suspicious bookies decided not to accept any more bets — but by then several of Fleet Street's finest had managed to put down wagers of £100 or more at the lucrative odds of 20-1. Strangely, both William Hill and Ladbrokes have said they will pay up. Could it be that they don't want to spoil their friendly relations with the Fourth Estate?

YET ANOTHER hack from the London *Evening Standard* has had his collar felt. Following David Skan's sojourn in a police cell for being "disgustingly drunk" (see last *Eye*), the paper's environmental hack Peter Gruner has been held on suspicion of plotting a terrorist act.

The cause of Gruner's downfall was his curious hobby: he collects bullets. Some of them are kept in his desk drawer at the *Standard*, but cherished specimens are often carried about in his pockets like pet mice, so he can take them out and admire them whenever he feels the urge.

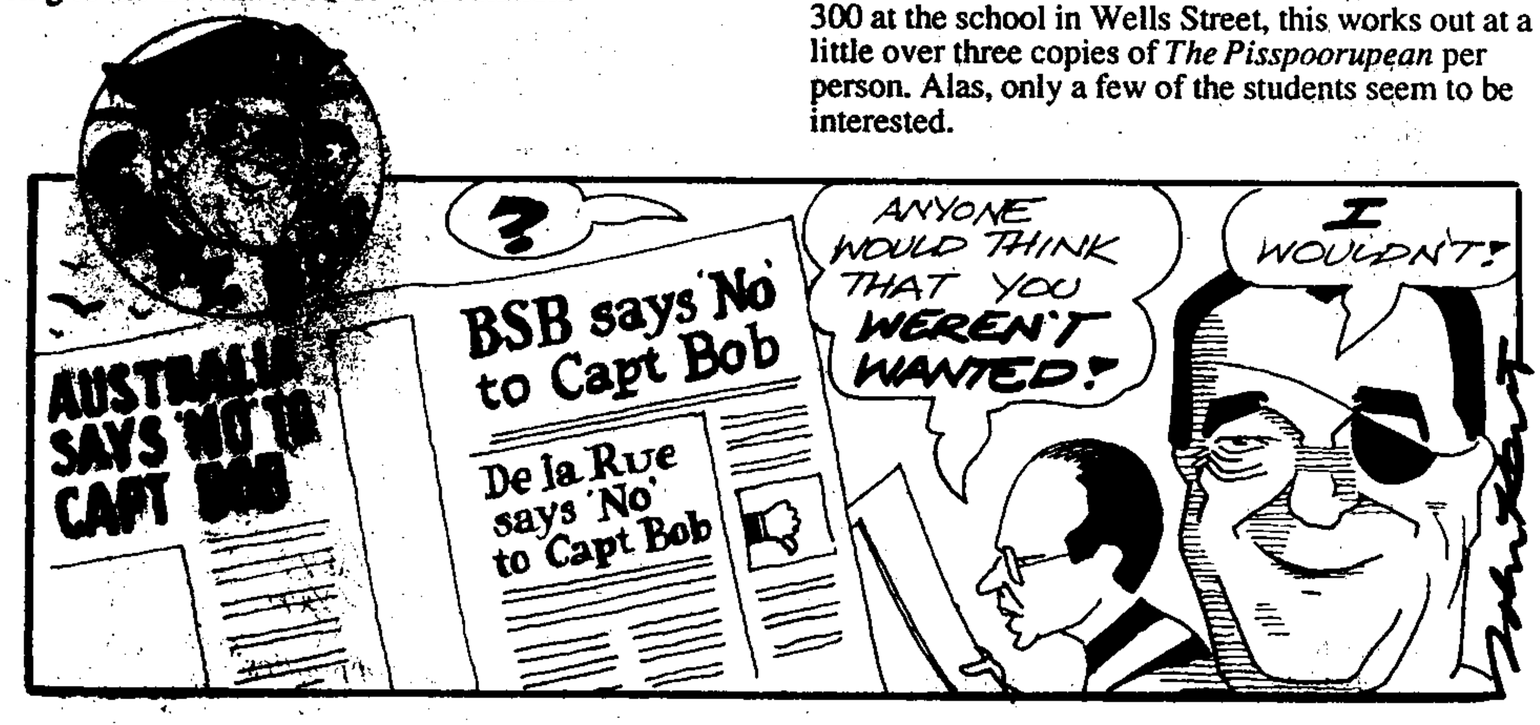
Arriving at the House of Commons for a press conference the other day, with a favourite bullet in his pocket, Gruner set off a full-scale terrorist alert as he passed through the security check. His feet hardly touched the ground; he was banged up in a cell for two hours, given an "intimate" strip search and fiercely interrogated.

The hapless hack then had to return to his office and explain to his news editor why he had been unable to cover the press conference. Inspector Knacker is still considering whether to press charges.

PS: It turns out that David Skan's ordeal behind bars was even more harrowing than we suggested in the last *Eye*. At Kensington nick he was thrown into a cell already occupied by a fellow inebriate who, as soon as he set eyes upon Skan, began to masturbate vigorously.

I HEAR dissident hacks on the *Sunday Getsmuchworse* have developed a new game — playing at being submariners.

After editor Robin "Moron" Morgan has passed through the office they all fall to the floor shouting "Dive, Dive, Dive!" They are not, of course, referring to the *Getsmuchworse*'s circulation.


AUSTRALIA SAYS 'NO' TO CAPT BOB
?
BSB says 'No' to Capt Bob
De la Rue says 'No' to Capt Bob
ANYONE WOULD THINK THAT YOU WEREN'T WANTED!
I WOULDN'T!

WHILE LOBBY hacks accompanying Neil Kinnock on his recent trip to America desperately sought "Bush snubs Kinnocchio" stories for the readers at home, commendable restraint was shown by the *Sun*'s scribe.

When bad weather cancelled a helicopter trip the Welsh Windbag was due to make, the hacks suggested that the Wapping boy — whose organ had already run a yarn headed "Lift snubs Kinnock" — send a story back reading "Kinnock's Chopper Cut Off". The hack declined.

WHILE rival loony-left hacks at the *Morning Star* and *Marxism Today* may not see eye-to-eye over the future of socialism, the World Cup brought them into happy agreement.

Marxism Today ran a competition coinciding with Italia '90 asking readers to name a World XI of their choice. The ever-aware sub-editors at the *Morning Star* seized the opportunity and entered a British Justice XI consisting of the Maguire Seven and the Guildford Four with the Birmingham Six as substitutes.

Their entry won and, in a rare show of left unity, *Marxism Today* has handed over a magnum of the finest Nicaraguan champagne to their comrades.

AS THE crisis in the Sunday "quality" market deepens, the *Observer* looks more and more like a sinking ship. Asked if this is the fault of editor, Donald Trelford, *Observer* hacks are prone to say "Donald who?"

Trelford's last major contribution to the paper was interviewing Imelda Marcos ("I understand you like shoes, your Grace?" etc) and after this heroic effort he went on holiday. The Friday that the Ridley affair blew up he was still on holiday in Bath, but decided not to cut short his rest and recuperation for the sacking of a cabinet minister.

However, the release of the nurse, Daphne Parrish, *did* force him back to his office where he wrote a forceful front page piece. He then went back on holiday.

Staff find this facet of Trelford's behaviour particularly irritating as the circulation dives and the redundancies increase. So many reporters have gone recently that when Trelford does order a piece to be done it is difficult to find anyone to do it. (So farewell then Eileen Macdonald, Tim Walker, Simon de Bruxelles, Robin Lustig, Nigel Hawkes...)

If sales drop below 500,000, will "Tiny" Rowland finally make a move and offer Pixie a pay-off that would keep even Imelda in shoes?

THE latest message from *The European* editor, Ian Watson, to his hacks looks ominous for "*Le Pisspauvre*".

In a memo two weeks ago, he instructed "all members of *The European* editorial staff to order a regular copy of *The European* through their local newsagent, if possible for home delivery". Since it is universal practice on newspapers for staff to be given free copies of their product, this edict has not gone down too well with some of Watson's crew.

Meanwhile Cap'n Bob's generosity knows no bounds. Students at the two Berlitz language schools in London, both owned by the multilingual Maxwell, are being provided with 1,500 copies of *The European*. As there are approximately 100 students on the books at the Oxford Street school and 300 at the school in Wells Street, this works out at a little over three copies of *The Pisspoorupean* per person. Alas, only a few of the students seem to be interested.

THE ultra-nice reputation of boyish new *Times* editor Simon Jenkins has taken a bit of a dive. Since being installed in the editor's chair he seems to have inherited some of the "arse-kicking" habits of his predecessor, Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson.

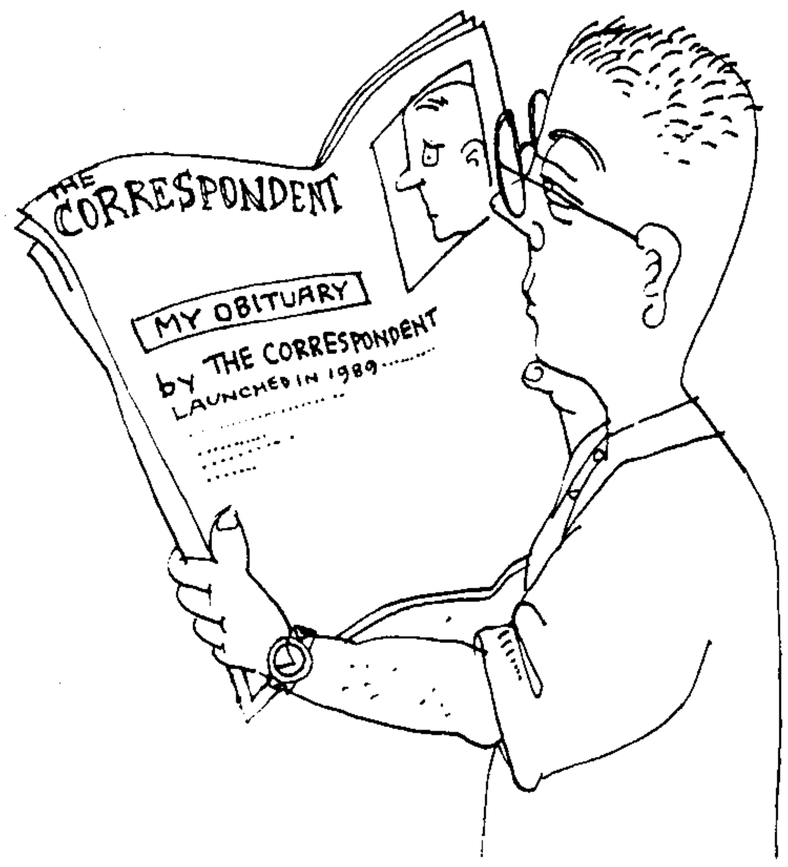
Soon after coming to *The Times*, Jenkins sent a hand-written note to the paper's veteran science editor, Pearce Wright, saying how wonderful the science coverage was. Wright beamed with pleasure; in all his years toiling under "Gorbals" he had never had such words of praise. Now, he felt, he had a boss who valued him.

A fortnight later Jenkins called Wright into his office and delivered a brief announcement: "I have offered the science editor's job to Nigel Hawkes, foreign editor of the *Observer*." He added that Wright could, if he wished, contribute to the paper "in other ways".

A flabbergasted Wright asked what these other ways might be. "I don't know," Jenkins admitted.

Not surprisingly, Wright interpreted this as constructive dismissal. The matter is now in the hands of his lawyers.

PS: Jenkins has sent a magisterial memo to all *Times* home specialists, rebuking them for the "poor quality" of their English. "Time and again," he writes, "I have noticed unusable introductions, sloppy sentences, bad spelling and grammar." The effect is slightly spoilt by the fact that, in the very same memo, he spells the word queue as "cue".



THE change of regime at Lambeth Palace coincides with a change of religious affairs correspondent at the *Daily Telegraph* where the amiable Jonathan Petre has been replaced by a jolly young sacristan by the name of Damian Thompson.

Thompson certainly knows a thing or two about religious affairs. Before joining the *Telegraph* he worked on a local paper in Reading where he got to know the Rev Brian Brindley — the professedly "anti-gay" vicar whose secret fantasies about young men were exposed in the *News of the Screws* two years ago.

JUST FANCY THAT

EAGLE STAR, the insurance giant (prop: British American Tobacco), is considering replacing its complicated advance warning fire alarm system built by Dunford Hepburn Ltd at its Cheltenham computer centre.

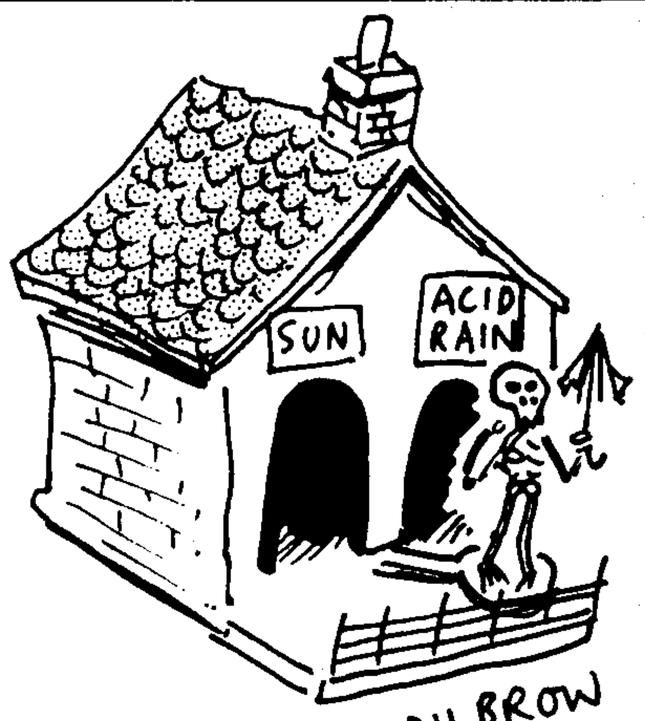
As we revealed two years ago (*Eye* 683), there are serious problems with the system which is liable to false alarms.

London Transport, meanwhile, has just installed a new fire alarm system in a number of tube stations, including King's Cross. London Underground says the system provides an "excellent service".

The manufacturer? Dunford Hepburn.

DOWN ON THE FARM

with Old Muckspreader



NICHOLAS Ridley's public humiliation for being disrespectful to the European Commission is only assumed by the vulgar to have been a victory for the Belgian Empire.

Among Mr Ridley's final acts of patronage were the appointment of several anti-EEC folk to Euro-quangos. Old Muck lives for the day the Common Market's agricultural policy causes it to break up, but the fissures may appear first in the nominally vacuous economic and social committee. M. Delors asks it to rubber stamp our socialist future, but Mr Ridley's appointees are determined to frustrate him.

No one seems to have twigged that Ridley's successor, Peter Lilley, is more hostile to Euro-crap than his predecessor. He hides it well behind obsessive discretion and the fact that he and his wife are Francophiles, but old hands in the Bow Group, his political kindergarten, recall how he loathed the commission's protectionist, bureaucratic ambitions.

Ridley has been writing to those MPs who sent sympathetic notes of solidarity assuring them that he is not dead yet and that he intends to question further why the EEC is so shy of democracy and why no one can audit its accounts or offer any coherent idea of what it is for — and he was vice-president of the European Movement for 20 years.

Worms are turning.

THE British Egg Information Service is a PR front that tries to assure us that British hens' bottoms are cleaner than Euro-hens' bottoms. It is amazing what Cameron Chump and Partners, PR experts to the food trade, will write and print for a fat fee.

If Old Muck thought for a moment that the "Buy British" wheeze was an act of defiance against the 1992 rhubarb crop, then he or she would commend a grudging support for the silly efforts of the BEIS. But the promotion of virtuous British eggs over nasty foreign ones is merely a sign of brain death at the British Egg Information Council HQ in Cromwell Road.

If Old Muck suggested that many eggs stamped with British lion marks might prove to come from our community colleagues' flocks anyway, that would be an outrage; but the BEIC fights back with the offering of a poster featuring a boiled egg and a lion doll.

The tissue of dribble and hogwash concerning dirty eggs and dirty chickens has long been washed away leaving only poor forlorn Edwina Currie on the backbenches for having wrongly libelled the great British poultry industry.

BY THE TIME you read this *Eye* the Milk Marketing Board will have partially revealed its clever and subtle attempts to preserve its brutal and inefficient monopoly.

The MMB's smug empire had a death sentence declared upon it by the Centre for Policy Studies which was interpreted as a thumbs-down from Downing Street.

Not wanting to be deprivileged, MMB lawyers have been working overtime to convert the board into a cosy and fashionable worker's cooperative linking all the dairy industry in an affectionate embrace. What is worrying the CPS watchdogs is that Mr Gummer, nominally still our secretary for agriculture, has blessed the revamp.

The questions to ask are: will dairymen be free to sell their produce where they like; to whom they like; and at whatever price is agreed? And can non-UK dairy products flow freely into our markets? If the answer to any of these questions is no, then the milk monopoly will still be a magnificent monument to Stalinist mercantilism after 11 years of reforming Thatcherism.

THERE ARE several theories why Mr David MacLean was not moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Scottish Office in the recent reshuffle.

One of his No Turning Back Group cronies reports that it was the PM's fear that he only knew how to say yes to subsidy-seekers — the last thing the Scottish Office needed.

Sporting Life

A TRULY memorable sight graced Newbury Races on 21 July: our glorious leader, looking rather stout in a smart straw hat and boldly patterned dress with her handbag at the ready like matron at Speech Day.

"You know," said one cheerfully inebriated punter outside the paddock bar, "that woman looks exactly like Margaret Thatcher. Oh, my God..." — his expression changed suddenly — "it *is* Margaret Thatcher!"

Onward she strode, cutting a swathe through the incredulous racegoers as she and Lord Carnarvon went from his executive box to the parade ring. Those brave enough to linger for a second glance were momentarily confused by the white-haired old boy with glasses toddling by her side. Surely Denis hadn't aged that much, they thought, and he wouldn't be seen dead in a scarlet bow tie. This was of course Maggie's other royal consort, little Lord Wyatt of Weeford, Tote chairman, professional old codger, voice of the common man, etc.

The Newbury visit was his idea and was Thatcher's second visit to a racecourse in four months. There will be more: Wyatt has been using his influence in Downing Street to try to head off publication of a report into the possible privatisation of the Tote. The report was commissioned by the Government in 1988 and delivered in May 1989, but so far its contents have not been revealed to the public or Parliament.

The report's authors, a Lloyds merchant bank team, are believed to have recommended, with stunning naivety, that the Tote's betting shops should be sold off to the private sector. Wyatt, like his political mistress, is known to favour such a solution in principle, even though they both ought to realise that it would be a disaster for the long-term financing of the racing industry.

Wyatt's eagerness not to make waves too soon may not be unconnected with the fact that his own job is up for renewal next spring. He needs the support of the current occupant of Number 10, but they both understand that too previous a move on the privatisation front could backfire on them both.

Flattery and place-seeking are, it seems, everywhere the currency of modern flatracing. A recent visit to Sheik Mohammed's Dalham Hall stud near Newmarket witnessed an hilarious tennis match between His Bigness and his racing manager, the normally pasty-faced Anthony Stroud. The unusually pink and perspiring Stroud was losing the game, but putting on a magnificent display of obsequious grovelling in the process.

"Oh, good shot, sir," he kept exclaiming loudly, while hurling himself around the court like Tigger. "And well played again, sir. You're just too good for me, sir." It's entirely understandable that the otherwise unexceptional Stroud should stroke the hand that feeds him. To what depths of appalling mediocrity might he otherwise be consigned? Much the same could be said of Lord Woodrow Wyatt.

'Major Bonkers'

Sally Deedes

LAST February pensioners Alice and Douglas Alexander received a bill from British Gas for £486, their previous average quarterly bill being around the £46 mark. To make matters worse, a month later they received an additional bill for a further £282 making a total outstanding of £768.

Worried out of their minds, they wrote at the beginning of March to complain about the bill, suggesting to British Gas that since their meter had recently been changed there might have been a problem in its installation.

British Gas replied seven weeks later. The "problem meter" possibility was categorically refuted — the reason for the massive increase in the bill, BG stated, was due to the fact that the three previous bills had been estimated and this new one was making up the shortfall. BG generously suggested an "easy payment scheme" allowing settlement over a period of a year to help matters out.

The Alexanders were, at this stage, extremely disturbed but they were able to call upon their son-in-law, Robert Breckman, a chartered accountant, to take up the cudgels on their behalf. He wrote to British Gas pointing out that no new appliances had been bought over the last two years and that since the existing appliances amounted only to one oven, an Ascot water heater and a gas fire in the kitchen, he hardly felt this would constitute a 213 percent increase in therm consumption. He reprimanded BG for threatening two very old and, by now, confused people and enclosed a cheque for £40 in "full and final settlement". The letter went directly to the regional director.

Two weeks later, British Gas's credit manager responded. There had been an error and he was immediately reducing the bill to £138. Mr Breckman wrote again asking what had happened to the £40 cheque and requesting compensation and costs on behalf of Mr and Mrs Alexander. In June, he learnt that British Gas had banked the cheque for £40 and subsequently reduced the amount now outstanding to £98. Mr Breckman stood his ground and replied that the cheque was sent "in settlement" and not to be used as payment on account.

Finally, on 25 June 25, came a grovelling letter of apology. British Gas accepted that £40 cleared the account and also agreed to pay £220 compensation for fees and the distressed caused to the Alexanders. The original bill of £768 had now been reduced to £40 to cover the period of nine months' consumption.

How many others, without the help of an efficient son-in-law, have had to pay up willy-nilly for bills that have not been checked?

A HANDOUT to harassed commuters at Euston station explains the recent changes on two miles of inter-city track in the Weedon area. The work will cost £800,000 and will enable maximum speed on the line to rise to 100mph — thus slashing journey time by up to a whole minute.

"I take a dim view of politics"

Grovel

LORD Hailsham, the old humbug whose *A Sparrow's Flight* has been topping the bestseller list for the past couple of weeks, was not always convinced that he should write his memoirs, it seems.

A perusal of his 1975 book about his religious faith, *The Door Wherein I Went*, yields the following explanatory passage: "It is more conventional, and perhaps more profitable, for ageing politicians to publish a volume of autobiography or reminiscences. At least I am sure that this, for me at least, would be a mistake. I have been trained to a profession which is taught that it is wrong to give other people away, and I am sure it would be foolish to give myself away even if I had such entertaining memories as David Niven, or such exciting adventures as Winston Churchill to recall. Any autobiography I wrote would thus inevitably be lacking in spice and candour".

Quite.

● *STROLLING through Bunhill Fields one sunny afternoon, my eye is caught by a red-faced, dark-suited gent sitting on a park bench and holding a live eagle on his arm.*

A be-denimed female photographer with an American accent is ordering him to adopt ever more undignified positions while she snaps away with an expensive camera. Every so often an eager "assistant" rushes forward to adjust the man's hair, or dab some eagle-droppings off his jacket.

On closer inspection of this bizarre scene I discover that the hectoring lenswoman is Annie Leibovitz, who has flown over on Concorde to take this photograph for Tina Brown's Vanity Fair magazine. And who is the subject of the portrait, the cavorting bird-of-prey handler? It is, I regret to say, our most distinguished newspaper editor, Sir Andreas Whittam Strobes.

TO CHATSWORTH — for the Grand Ball given by my old friends, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire.

Only one thing spoils an otherwise delightful evening. During the brilliant firework display, the climax of the party, our enjoyment is marred by the roar of a helicopter taking off in full view of the guests.

It turns out to be none other than Sir "Jams" Goldsmith leaving the party prematurely.

CIVIL LIST SHOCK

Pseuds Corner

And what a night it was! One of those rare moments — after Swindon, after Hillsborough and Heysel — when it was possible to think of football, once more, as a beautiful game.

Watching it on the edge of my seat, I felt myself succumbing to something deeper than the beauty of the game itself. One level down from the pleasure of the game, I could feel the deep pull of myth. I am enough of a child at the end of empire to feel the vanishing shades of Dunkirk and 'we happy few' hovering over the greensward.

MICHAEL IGNATIEFF
Observer

At his [Alain Chapel's] restaurant, one evening, while eating the traditional gâteaux des foies blonds, the same frisson ran through my body, the same tears formed in my eyes, as when I listened to a Mozart quartet. It is an unbelievable but fair comparison.

HENRI GAULT
Independent

Anyway, it [Schubert's C major Quintet] was still filling my ears and my soul when I got home, so I put the 33⅓ version on the record-player in the drawing-room, the CD on my portable player with its miniature speakers in the bedroom, and the cassette in the study. That, I concluded, was the right way to unpack after a holiday; wherever I wandered in my flat I heard it.

I heard it, and thought of the man who wrote it, in the last year of his life. I heard it, and turned the miracle of his genius this way and that, without finding a reflection that would explain him. I heard it, and knew that it would remain for ever, echoing in the world, a sign as clear and full of promise as God's covenant of the rainbow.

BERNARD LEVIN
The Times

The laugh [Keith Richards'] takes its shape from the exhaust fumes of his words. It is the tubercular love-child of a waste-disposal unit and an espresso machine, a choking press of ragged air, catching limescale in the funnel of his throat before belching out in a vapour of aitches. Delighted, you keep on wanting to say 'do it again' but he usually obliges before long anyway. He laughs a lot.

NICK COLEMAN
Time Out

She [Anouska Hempel] is simply the most stylish woman in Britain. Her showroom in Pond Place, Chelsea, provides ample proof for the doubters. Here, encapsulated between four walls, are all the elements that set her apart in splendid isolation from other designers.

Here are the signature swags and drapes executed in Thai midnight blue silk, their sombre richness alleviated by slatted mirrored screens and punctuated here and there by bowls of sugar-pink hydrangeas. A pungent pot-pourri of tiny rosebuds fills the air, adding an almost Byzantine and ecclesiastical touch to the already reverent mood.

LAWRENCE MYNOTT
The Independent

Amongst this year's sculptors, Michael Sandle makes his provocative statement against the media in *A Mighty Blow for Freedom: Fk the Media*. This is an astonishingly aggressive bronze in which an impassioned figure destroys a television set.**

Royal Academy of Arts press release

CONTRIBUTORS: Keith Flett, Stephen Luxford, G. Morton, A.J. Highman, Patricia A. Askew, Chris Cooper.

£10 paid for entries

● *I AM interested to see an interview in the Guardian with my erstwhile friend Teresa Gorman, the Tory MP for Harvey Proctor's old seat of Billericay.*

Teresa complains bitterly of the sexist treatment she has received from male colleagues, recalling that when she was first elected male MPs shouted at her: "Show us your birth certificate! Are you a man or a woman? Are you a man in drag?"

She implies that the question about the birth certificate was merely another way of casting doubt on her gender. Not so, however. The reason MPs wanted to see her birth certificate was that, just before the election, it had been revealed that she had lopped almost 10 years off her real age!

I AM sorry to learn that my handsome friend Dominic Lawson, editor of the *Spectacularlycontroversial*, may be able to dish it out but he is a little shy, as they say, about "taking it".

***Tatler* recently asked Dominic and his buxom sister Nigella if they would agree to be interviewed together for the magazine. Dominic has now declined the invitation. And for why? He explained that the hackette chosen to do the interview, Jessica Berens, was "too perceptive". Not something that has been said about Ms Berens before...**

● *I HEAR that Alexander Cockburn, the dashing, pro-Palestinian son of my old pal Claud, the deceased Communist hack and former Eye contributor, has emerged as an unlikely champion of censorship.*

Viking is shortly to publish The Book of Lies, an anthology edited by crime novelist Philip Kerr. One of the passages chosen by Kerr was an extract from Claud Cockburn's memoirs, I, Claud, in which the hoary old Stalinist confessed to having written lies with Arthur Koestler about fascist atrocities in Spain in the newspaper Agitprop.

When approached for permission to publish the extract, Cockburn Minor refused because he didn't think his father should be associated with such a book.

NICHOLAS Ridley must be delighted that his remarks on the EEC and West Germany's plan to create a Fourth Reich based in Stow-on-the-Wold have received firm support from at least one respected source: the London North branch of the National Front. Last month it passed a resolution saying: "This branch wholeheartedly supports the remarks of Nicholas Ridley..."

With friends like this, does Old Nick need enemies too?

MY FRIEND, Jaci Stephen, is worried. Her comic novel *Definitions of a Horse* is to be published at the end of this month and Jaci is disturbed at speculation that it will be a steamy bodice-ripper. "I don't understand it," she trills, "I mean there's only a single masturbation scene in the entire book".

In the opening pages we are introduced to Kenneth Salmon, a 50-year-old schoolteacher who has trouble summoning an erection. "He let go of his penis as if it were a glove puppet for which the operator has lost enthusiasm... Choosing a clean pair of underpants from a drawer... Salmon pulled them up carefully over his genitals, concealing his treasure with the delicacy and affection with which he imagined Harry Corbett once packed Sooty into his holiday suitcase."

This is not the only bizarre association between television and sex. A couple of paragraphs later we are treated to the following observation: "He tried to recall the theme tune of *Thunderbirds*, which seemed appropriate under the circumstances, and allowed his hand to conduct the movement in time with his humming."

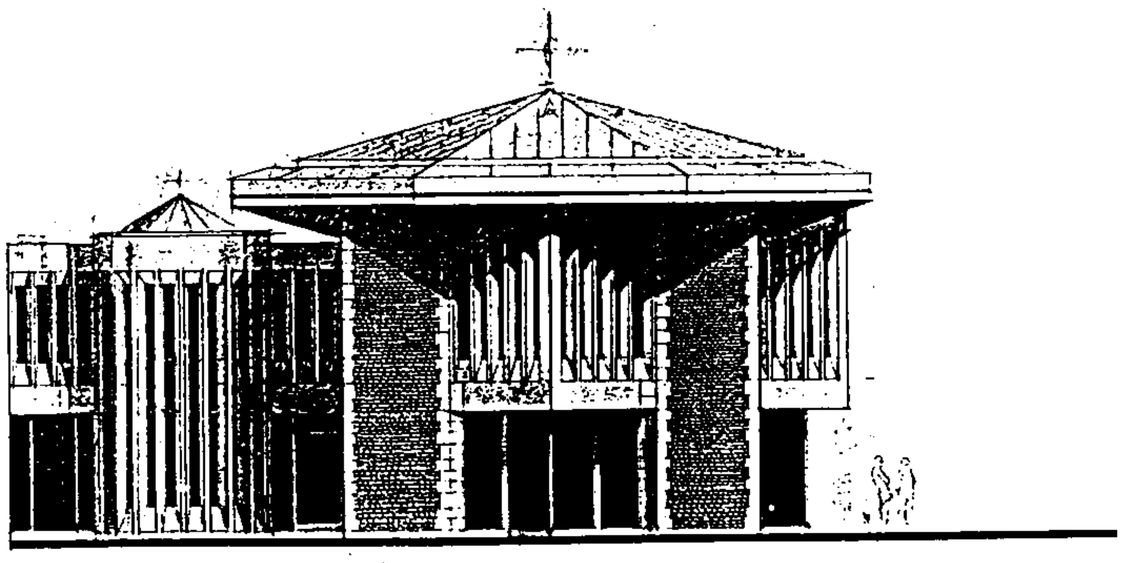
Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

CHELMSFORD. The County Town of Essex. You might imagine it to be a pleasant old English market town, with gently winding streets lined with a pleasing mixture of brick and plastered buildings and given interest by grand Georgian coaching inns. That is indeed the way Chelmsford used to look, as pre-war photographs confirm.

But not now. Yes, the 18th century Shire Hall is still there, but all around old buildings have given way to new shopping parades and centres of unredeemed architectural mediocrity while inner relief roads slice through the town. To complete this transformation, and to celebrate its own centenary, the county council recently inflicted a huge new office block on the heart of the town, cleverly designed to fit in by looking like a shopping centre. Chelmsford is now East Anglia's Detroit, the Birmingham of Essex.

But there is still one oasis in the town centre: the old churchyard around what used to be St Mary's, the medieval parish church, but which since 1914 has been Chelmsford Cathedral. To reflect its elevated status, the church was enlarged with great tact by Sir Charles Nicholson, one of the most sensitive ecclesiastical architects of recent times. His work here was a characteristic expression of that now utterly remote period at the beginning of this century when Anglican clergymen seemed to be men of education and visual sensibility who could be trusted to cherish the buildings in their care. No longer.



Sensitive souls are now strongly advised not to enter Chelmsford Cathedral for, in 1983, Nicholson's Bishop's Throne along with many other well-designed 19th and early 20th century furnishings were thrown out in an artistic carnage of impressive thoroughness. Gothic arcades now rise from a shiny polished stone floor — the hallmark of the work of Mr Robert Potter, the architect also responsible for installing Mr Palumbo's camembert in St Stephen's Walbrook in London (*Eye* 629 etc). Furnishings are now few: just chairs of bright unstained wood, gun-emplacement pulpits and a stone altar slab, while "the eyes are drawn to the dramatic and colourful hanging" on the east wall made by Miss Beryl Dean, the celebrated designer of ecclesiastical bedspreads. There is also a side chapel, defined by spiky wobbly railings made in the manner of a burnt hedge and furnished in the European Expressionist kitsch style.

In fact, the whole effect is that of an old German church gutted in the war and rebuilt in, say, 1952 — a remarkable achievement seeing as Chelmsford Cathedral was not bombed. Such is the creation of Chelmsford's dynamic Provost, Canon Moses, and his architect. The trouble is, however, that there is nothing here of the vision and taste of the late Dean Hussey, who filled Chichester Cathedral with works by distinguished modern artists. But on the other hand, unfortunately, the new work at Chelmsford is not bad enough to laugh at. Just like everything else new in this sad town, it is just utterly, irredeemably mediocre.

But there is no stopping Canon Moses. Not content with having replaced the old Cathedral Hall with a new Cathedral Centre containing a Chapter House, he also has his eyes on the churchyard, the Cathedral Precinct which is much enjoyed by the poor people of Essex. For now this public space is to be enhanced by an extension to the cathedral designed by Mr Potter. This is to be a larger example of the type of coffee lounge kiosks which are being tacked on to churches in almost every prosperous parish in England. But why? The Cathedral Centre contains rooms for parish, Cathedral and town use as well as a library and Chapter House, yet the proposed new building is "to house a Treasurery [sic], Exhibition Room, Bookshop and Refectory".

Canon Moses explains his urgent vision of the "on-going ministry of the cathedral" in his report, for, "The Mother Church of the Diocese should be able to offer food and drink for those who visit by providing a place where people can stop on their journey and while imbibing, meet others, relax and feel at home. This ministry of catering [*no, I am not making this up*], we believe, will be of great benefit to local people and those who work in offices and shops nearby..." So the Cathedral Precinct is no longer to be a special, serene place but one dedicated to the activities which already take place in the Wimpy Bars and Pizza Huts which already proliferate in the centre of Chelmsford. Such is the Church's identification with modern life.

What is most curious about the Church's nationwide "ministry of catering" is that huge sums of money are being spent on providing places to drink coffee and toilets to go to afterwards all over the country at a time when the Church of England is in the throes of the worst spiritual crisis it has suffered for a century and a half and church attendance is at an all time low. Is there a connection, I wonder?

'Piloti'

PROPERTY NEWS

MANCHESTER's long-suffering poll taxpayers could be stung for nearly £5 million thanks to a remarkably one-sided set of land deals that property company Merlin International has negotiated with city politicians.

Details have come to light following a recent batch of planning applications to redevelop rundown parts of the city centre and the burghers of Manchester could be left with the bill unless the little-known Wimbledon-based Merlin International discovers a Northern conscience.

Eighteen months ago Merlin struck a complicated deal with Greater Manchester's 10 local authorities to develop part of the land surrounding the city's controversial G-Mex exhibition centre, a seven-year thorn in the side of the cash-conscious Manchester authorities.

Merlin wants to build a luxury prime-site shopping complex in a disused warehouse next to G-Mex in the city centre. Remarkably, politicians who negotiated the deal were so desperate to dispose of the G-Mex on-site assets that they allowed a clause into the contract which could render county poll taxpayers liable if the scheme does not go ahead.

Fears that it will not go ahead are growing. Although Merlin is going ahead with a nearby £20m office block behind Manchester's Free Trade Hall, it has yet to submit details for the shopping centre plan or applied, as expected, for a £20m grant from the Central Manchester Development Corporation towards building the complex.

Now Manchester rues its haste to court Merlin, but what was the rush? The deal was administered by the Greater Manchester Residuary Body, set up by the Government in 1986 to wind down the affairs of the abolished Greater Manchester council. At the time of the Merlin deal, however, the residuary body was itself being dissolved and its members, drawn from across the county and traditionally at odds with the city, were determined to dispose of any valuable land in Manchester which the RB still held.

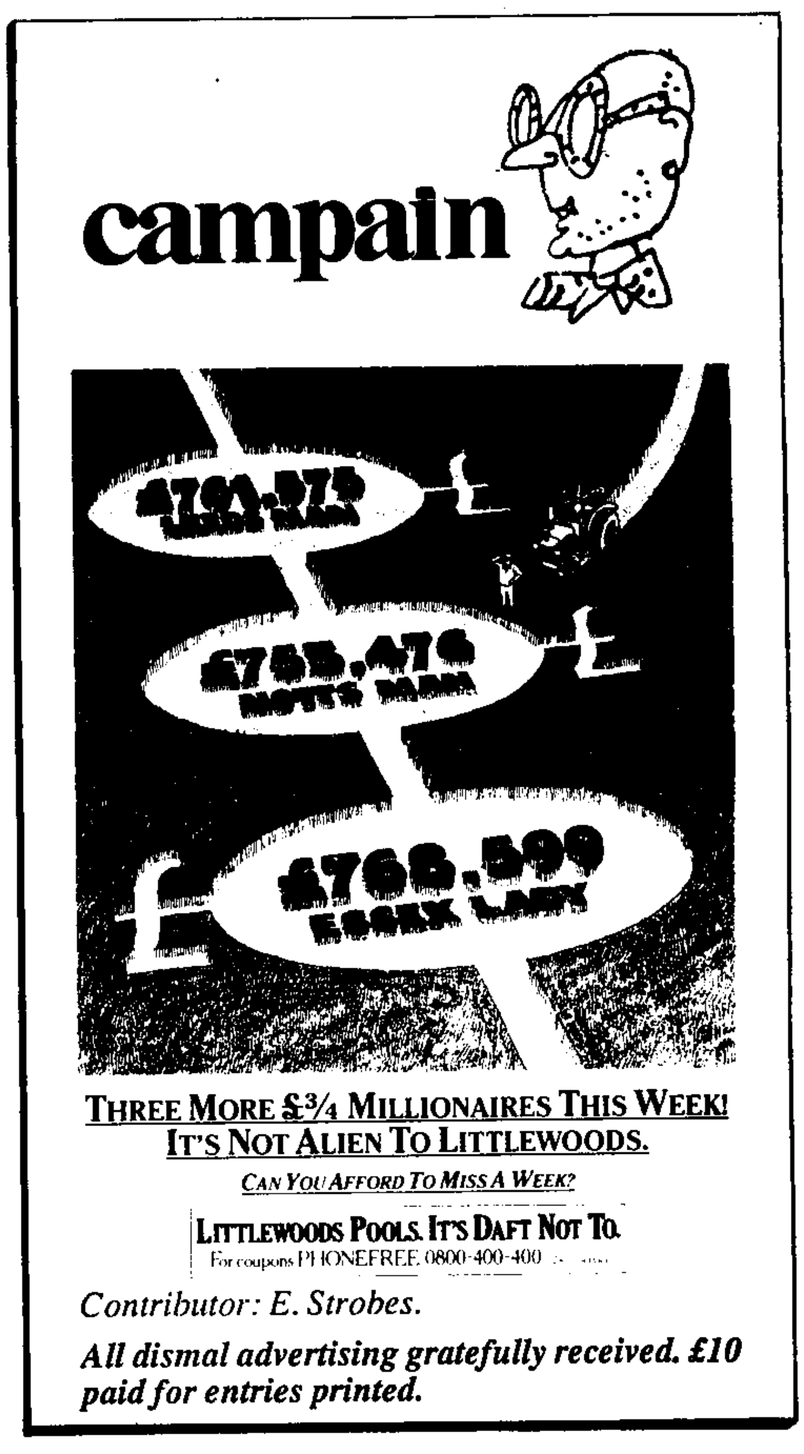
The deal they struck allowed Merlin to place a mere £3½m alongside £22m from the public sector in the form of the site. For this Merlin took a 75 per cent stake in the new company! If the deal now falls through Merlin could sell the site for a fat profit and claim back the £3½m it paid for its stake in the venture on top of legal costs. If the complex succeeds Merlin can still force out the public sector after two years. Ironically, Merlin's share prices have plummeted from 149p last year to 12p.

Graham Stringer, leader of Manchester city council, has described the Merlin deal as "obscene... the worst deal the public sector has ever had". He recently wrote confidentially to fellow local council leaders — the letter was leaked to inner cities minister Michael Portillo — voicing fears that the public could be stung for £5m if the deal falls through, on top of liabilities which are expected to be incurred over the G-Mex centre.

In private Stringer and his colleagues blame the mess on their former Labour colleagues on the now-defunct Greater Manchester council who failed to monitor properly the development of the G-Mex centre.

It was built into the crust of the old central railway station by a joint venture company including Commercial Union and the Greater Manchester council. In the run-up to the latter's abolition in 1986, the faction-ridden Labour group sold the centre's birthright for the promise of executive seats for GMC's leaders. They also tied the centre up in a labyrinth of obscure companies through which the private sector took no risks, Commercial Union had a guaranteed profit of £350,000 but the public sector liabilities could total £30m by the end of the century!

Only the threat of legal action by the city council, concerned at the threat of spiralling public sector liabilities and the lack of elected representatives to protect the public interest, prompted the RB into taking charge of the G-Mex network.


campain
THREE MORE £¾ MILLIONAIRES THIS WEEK!
IT'S NOT ALIEN TO LITTLEWOODS.
CAN YOU AFFORD TO MISS A WEEK?
LITTLEWOODS POOLS. IT'S DAFT NOT TO.
For coupons PHONEFREE 0800-400-400

Contributor: E. Strobes.

All dismal advertising gratefully received. £10 paid for entries printed.

EYE TV

Commercials

(ITV/C4)

GO TO A dinner party or barbecue and what do people say? "Television? We hardly ever watch it. Well, we watch the adverts. In fact I sometimes think the commercial breaks are better than the programmes!"

There it is, the great English middle-class recyclable opinion. But is it actually true? I mean, do they watch the adverts? As all the programmes at the moment are repeats, Square Eyes thought it would be useful to look at the commercials, some of which are at least new.

The most popular category is still Blokey, in which an ingratiating voice and a would-be jokey slogan push the product. Previous examples have been "Go on! Spoil Yourself!" and "Naughty But Nice!", both for fundamentally fattening dairy products and the latter, incidentally, created by Salman Rushdie before he wrote his "Literary but Lethal!" novels.

The Blokey category divides in two. An example of middle-class Blokey is the current campaign for British lamb fronted by Geoffrey Palmer, the lugubrious actor whom Wendy Craig very nearly betrayed in Carla Lane's *Butterflies*. Palmer, muttering about his mischievous nephews, explains the cheapness and ease of sheep meat. "Slam In The Lamb!" he urges. The problem is that this sounds more like an Australian euphemism for sexual intercourse than a recipe for meat.

Working class Blokey is represented in the current campaigns by dairy products again, with "Oi! Scream For Cream!" About all this slogan has going for it is the rhyme; otherwise the phrase is inept, suggesting that cream is somehow hard to find or an endangered commodity, which it is only in the limited sense that people keep saying it is bad for you; a fact of which the manufacturers do not want to remind you. The advertising agency concerned is also, presumably, ignoring the connection of the phrase "Oi!" with the music of rock bands associated with Garry Bushell.

Other classic advertising techniques which survive largely unchanged are Surrogate Sex and Anthropomorphism. In the first category comes the puffs for "the perfect toothbrush" which has been designed, on scientific advice, to make (camera pans up thick cylindrical object) "The neck longer... the stalk wider". Oh, yes? And remember, girls, you put it in your mouth. Meanwhile, the long-running cute pooches strain of advertising is represented by the campaign for a new dog food called Buffet, in which a doleful voiceover moans about the terrible day a dog is having ("Stopped him being late for work... how was I to know it was Saturday?").

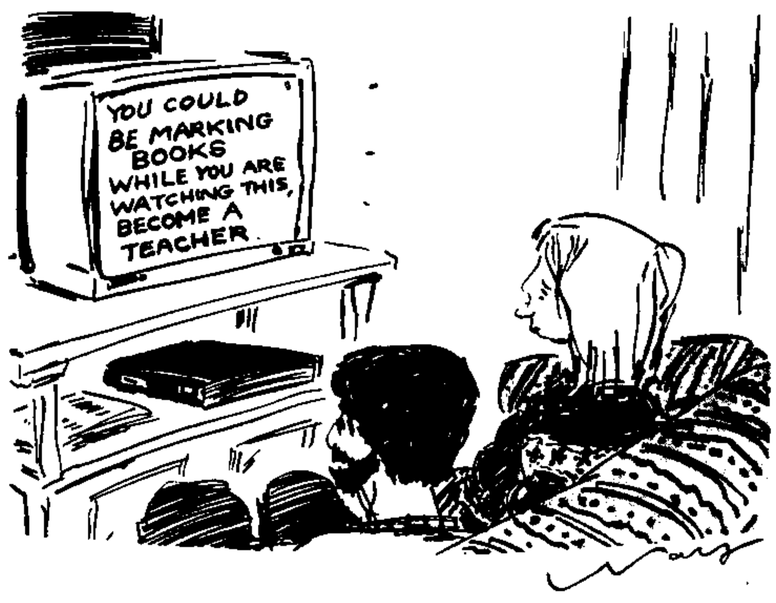
New strains of advertising do, however, arrive, reflecting social trends and the most noticeable of these currently is, inevitably, Green. Huge corporations now attempt to suggest a kindlier, gentler style of megalomania and global acquisitiveness. Right in the forefront of this style of selling is BOC. The screen is filled with pink flamingoes while the voice of Anthony Hopkins — Welsh means integrity, just as Cockney seems to mean household goods — outlines the company's major achievements. Then Hopkins says: "You're probably wondering why the screen is filled with pink flamingoes..." Well, wouldn't you know it's because there was a lake in Africa where poor little pink flamingoes couldn't live any more until along came nice BOC and made everything all right for them again. BOC: The Pink Flamingo's Friend.

But the best category is always Uphill Struggle, in which the message which the agency must propagate is a complicated or controversial one. Take the current Rennie commercials, which push the ludicrous idea that indigestion is somehow a status symbol (busy, busy people, so much in demand) even to the extent of inventing a new line, packaged like upmarket condoms, called Rennie Gold, for high executive dyspepsia.

However, the clear winners in the Uphill Struggle category are National Power and PowerGen. PowerGen's advert is pompous and expensive, as befits something about to be a Hanson advert. National Power presents information both so boring and so impenetrable that all the agency can do is have someone reading it out while filling the screen with some business involving flying chairs. The voice is saying: "As well as buying power from the regional company, you may be able to buy it direct from a major manufacturer... While transmission is the job of the regional companies, National Power actually makes more power than anyone else..."

It also probably makes more ads than any other generating company, but there may be some connection between the facts of an advertising campaign which, more closely than any in history, resembles being trapped in the corner with a party bore and that National Power last week announced losses of half a billion pounds and 5,000 projected redundancies.

'Square Eyes'



I-SKY

Scargill — under fire for his handling of funds during the 1984-85 strike — has taken an £85-a-night double room at the posh Royal County Hotel in Durham during his union's annual conference.

He and wife Anne checked in last Friday. The conference finishes today.

Plush bedrooms come complete with a private bath and shower, fridge, oak furniture and trouser press.

And the NUM president can tune in to films on Sky-TV.

PATRICK HENNESSY
Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Peter James.

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

MEDIA NEWS

THE AIR of crisis surrounding the launch of BBC Radio Five reached new levels last week when radio hacks threatened to black the service. This followed management's announcement of a new rota aimed at cutting staff and costs and raising output.

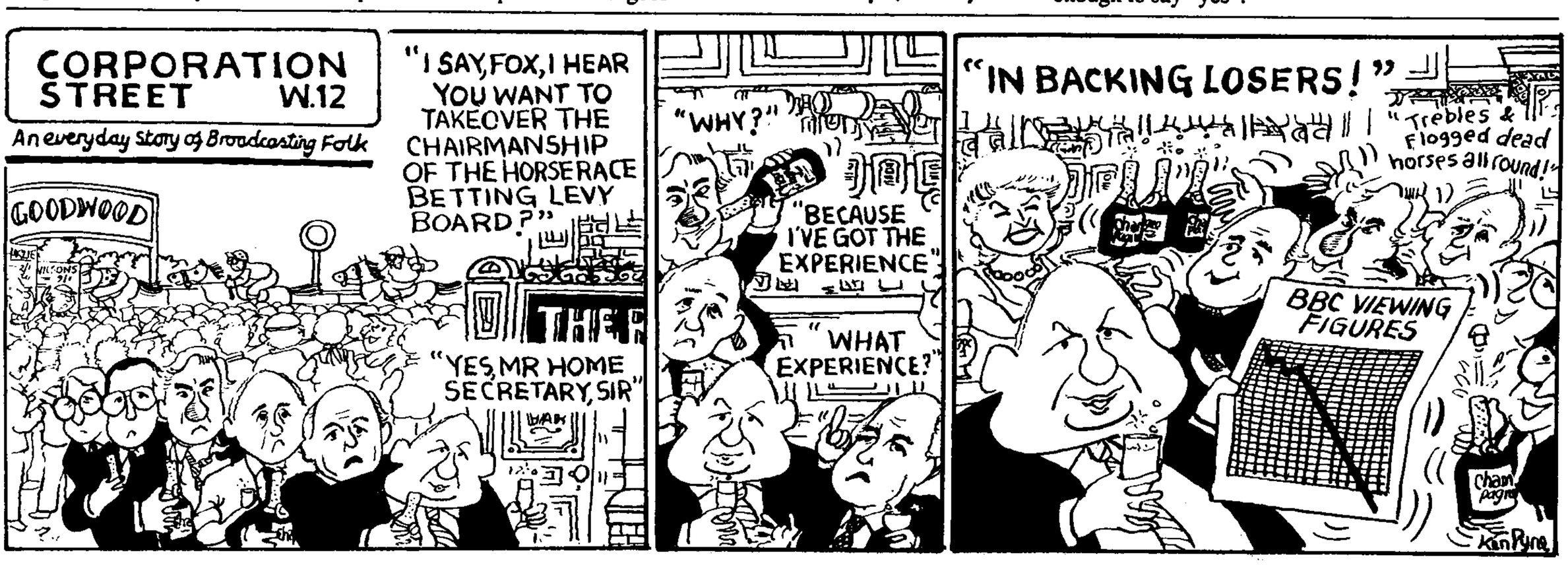
Hacks are furious at the changes which include longer shifts and, for some, the effective loss of several days' holiday a year. In an attempt to split the staff, a favoured few will get promotion and salary increases.

Newsroom boss John "grey man" Williams cunningly published the proposals before going on holiday, no doubt hoping the heat would die down before his return. Now senior executives are asking why the changes were proposed so close to the launch giving the hacks such a powerful bargaining weapon.

WHILE Rupert Murdoch and News International boast of a big increase in the number of people taking Sky TV, reports are reaching the *Eye* of some rather curious behaviour by those working for the franchise companies who sell the dishes door-to-door.

News International only recently switched emphasis from advertising the wonders of Sky to an enormous door-to-door campaign. The central point about the operation is that the salespeople earn no salary: all their income is commission on what they sell and the commission is extremely high.

These persistent young men and women often refuse to take "no" for an answer and insist, when people seem in doubt, that the dishes are being given away. Nor is it always made clear that the dish deal involves paying for 18 months — not a year as is normally supposed by anyone fool enough to say "yes".


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday Story of Broadcasting Folk
"I SAY, FOX, I HEAR YOU WANT TO TAKEOVER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE HORSERACE BETTING LEVY BOARD?"
GOODWOOD
"YES, MR HOME SECRETARY, SIR"
"WHY?"
"BECAUSE I'VE GOT THE EXPERIENCE"
"WHAT EXPERIENCE?"
"IN BACKING LOSERS!"
"Trebles & flogged dead horses all round!"
BBC VIEWING FIGURES
Ken Pyne

GALLEY-slaves at Sky Television's Isleworth HQ have been warned that they must learn to be "more security conscious". To this end the Digger's security manager, Ken Crouch, has sent a memo to all Sky staff.

"The Security Department has now stepped up the random searches carried out upon exiting the site," he writes menacingly. "If you intend removing an item from the site that is not your property, please ensure that you have an authority pass to remove the item. The authority pass must be the original, containing the date, type of item, serial number and signature of the Head of Department. Staff will not be able to remove anything from site until this pass is produced."

One person who may fall foul of this new edict from the Securitate is sports presenter Jason Dasey, whose desperate quest for free items of clothing was revealed in these pages recently (*Eye* 745). In future, if *Eye* readers wish to send him their castoffs, could they please enclose a signed note confirming that he has their authority to remove the garments in question from the Sky building?

Admittedly our "Clothes for Jason" appeal has not been very successful so far. Sitcom writer Andrew Nickolds posted a pair of old trousers, but they turned out to be six sizes too big for Dasey. Any other *Eye* readers who would like to help the poor lad overcome his lack of a "wardrobe budget" should send their gifts to Jason Dasey, Sky Television, 6 Centaurs Business Park, Grant Way, Isleworth, Middlesex TW7 5QD. And remember that all offerings should be, in Jason's words, "inventive and tasteful".

CONFUSION still reigns in Winchester where supporters and enemies of the incumbent Conservative MP, John "Brylcreem" Browne, continue to bicker among themselves.

Browne was forced to announce his retirement at the next general election following his suspension for 20 days by the House of Commons for failing to declare business interests. The split among local Tories was particularly evident at their summer ball in June when, in protest at the Conservative Association's handling of the Browne saga, several of the pro-Browne faction boycotted the event and even withdrew gifts which were to be auctioned for party funds.

The row continues despite the recent selection of Gerry Malone as the prospective parliamentary candidate and in the absence of any denial by Brylcreem that he will stand as an independent Conservative at the next election. There was considerable disquiet when the selection panel produced its shortlist of three: Gerry Malone, former MP for Aberdeen South; Nigel Evans, a West Glamorgan county councillor; and Geoff Lawler, former Bradford North MP.

At a meeting of the association's executive, several members expressed surprise that, out of a field of 278 candidates, the panel had failed to come up with a more interesting choice. Indeed, when the meeting was told to select two candidates to go before the full association, the panel was told that only one of the candidates was worth considering. A move to start the selection process over again was scotched and Malone and Evans were eventually shortlisted.

Malone is the editor of the Scottish supplement to *The Sunday Times*. He is also Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill's best friend and shares his boss's flat in Onslow Gardens. Malone has lost five separate parliamentary elections in four different Scottish constituencies and when he stood against David Steel in Roxburgh, Selkirk and East Peebles in 1979, he polled fewer votes than the number of paid-up members of the Conservative Association.

What wisdom can we expect from Malone once he is elected? Apparently he was an eager supporter of John Browne's privacy bill.

'Backbiter'

IN THE SALEROOM

AS THE curtain falls on the summer auction season at Christie's and Sotheby's, the art market bubble seems finally to have burst after two decades of steadily rising prices.

Saggy bosoms by Renoir and chocolate boxes by Manet are no longer as safe a bet against inflation as the greedy pin-striped brigade have been advocating with such success these past years. The Japanese, readily parting with their mega-yens, have at last caught a cold and realised that what goes up can, and often does, go down.

The auction boys now have to stop the haemorrhage of confidence and revive the market before the autumn season starts in September. As a first step, the Hon. Chas Allsopp, the Christie's chairman, wrote to the *Indie* recently trying to put the message over that prices for good art will still be strong. Interestingly for those close to the art market, he wrote: "It has always been our view at Christie's that this rise was unlikely to be sustainable" and he concludes that the present downslide "can only be healthy and should encourage all those who own, buy or sell works of art for the right reasons".

The right reasons? Presumably he means those who love a work of art as an item of beauty. This will come as a big surprise to all those twits who in the late seventies and eighties were persuaded by the big auctioneers to "invest" in art: twits like the British Rail Pension Fund (which got out of the market at just the right time) and who bought art on Sotheby's advice not to pop a Cezanne in a signalman's front parlour but for the mega-bucks Sotheby's promised when they came to sell. Hundreds of other "investors" did the same but were not so lucky in getting out in time.

The big question now is whether it is in everybody's interests for the auctioneer to advise both seller and buyer. The Office of Fair Trading allowed Christie's and Sotheby's to do this in 1974 and it is this that has led to the present position.

Perhaps Sir Gordon Borrie, director-general of the OFT, will at last realise the truth of the old biblical maxim that "no man can serve two masters..."

ART NEWS

ONE OF the world's greatest artists is being honoured by Random House this autumn in having 60 of his most distinctive paintings "lavishly reproduced in full colour" in a "very special work, published to coincide with his 75th birthday", entitled *A Man and His Art*.

The blurb solemnly intones: "Working in oil and acrylic, he has produced a large body of mostly abstract work, deeply influenced [sic] by the avant garde artists of the 1950s and 60s".

So why is such a work being published here by downmarket Ebury Press and not Thames & Hudson or Phaidon? Could it be because the artist is Old Toupee himself?

"These large, vibrantly coloured canvases are fascinating in and of themselves — as well as for what they reveal about this most enigmatic performer. Featuring an introduction by Sinatra, with unique insights into his passion for painting and enduring creativity, *A Man and His Art* is a fabulous gift for every Sinatra fan."

All that remains is for the *Sundry Times* to secure the serial rights.

STRANGEWAYS

THE *Eye*'s recent suggestion that the riot at Strangeways jail was anticipated and permitted by militant prison staff quarrelling with the Home Office about conditions won further support from a witness to the Woolf inquiry who gave evidence after the press had left.

On 28 June, Michael Cullen gave up his home leave to travel to Manchester from Lincoln prison where he was being held. Cullen was working in the kitchens at Strangeways when the riot broke out. He was asked if he knew something had been planned for the Sunday morning of the riots.

He replied: "It was a known fact for over a week that this particular sit-down was going to take place. It was the general norm — discussions went on between officers and inmates. I mean, some of the comments by officers was [*sic*]: 'Make sure I'm out before it starts properly.' I would say a good 80 per cent of people within the system knew that there would be some kind of demonstration on that particular day."

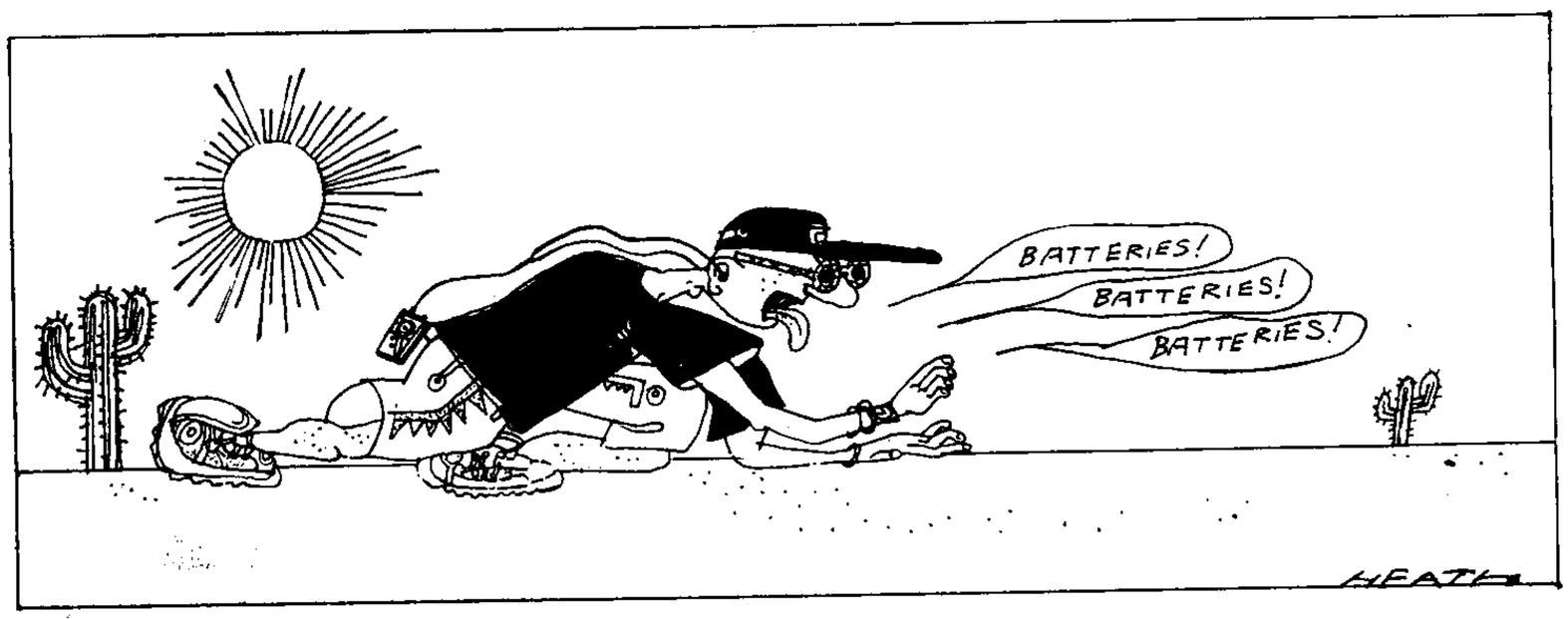
For some reason none of the lawyers at the inquiry nor even Lord Justice Woolf questioned Mr Cullen in any detail about this. Had they done so, the theory of a conspiracy to turn a blind eye to what was expected to be a small riot might have been substantially reinforced.

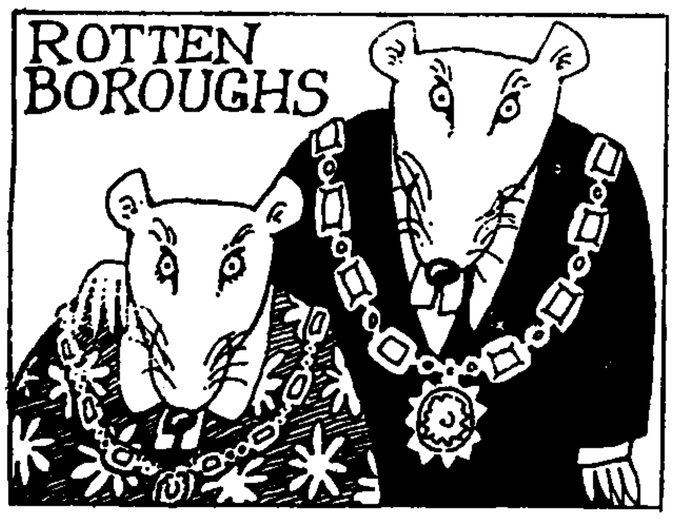
He was not cross-examined by John Hendy for the Prison Officers Association and Mr M. Lee QC, for the prison governor, asked him only a few questions. Mr Andrew Collins QC, for the Home Office, said he obviously didn't agree with what Cullen was saying, but didn't want to waste time cross-examining him. Since there are no lawyers at the inquiry representing prisoners, Cullen's evidence was effectively ignored.

Before Cullen, 13 other prisoners gave evidence — all of them, unlike Cullen, selected by the authorities. Six of these gave evidence in private. They were all well-known "grasses". Of the seven others, three were in the choir, three were on Rule 43B, and the other one described the rioters (accurately) as "criminals".

NUMERO UNO

MICHAEL HEATH





BIRMINGHAM

IT APPEARS that Birmingham city council's housing chairman, Stan Austin, doesn't read the *Eye*. If he did, he might have been a little more circumspect over the preferential treatment he has been receiving from the town hall's hard-pressed housing department.

The *Eye* revealed recently how Fat Stan was receiving a substantial rent rebate on his Castle Vale council home despite topping the list of expenses payments made to Birmingham councillors. But it now seems that Austin isn't doing too badly when it comes to getting repairs done, either.

Although tenants who don't share Austin's membership of the ruling Labour group have to wait two years, on average, for basic refurbishments, the kitchen units at 59 Sumbergh Croft, chez Austin, have been renewed in record time. An application was submitted on 17 May, work was authorised on 21 May, the job was started on the same day and the entire task completed by 5 June, less than three weeks after the initial repairs' request was received!

But what really rankle town hall officers who have contacted the *Eye* are their findings following a quick scout thorough the computer files. They show that repairs were carried out on Cllr Austin's garage on the same day they were reported, even though such jobs do not carrying emergency status. This must make Mr Austin the best-treated council tenant in Brum.

Since Austin is always telling tenants that due to financial constraints they must be patient when requesting repairs, perhaps he will now repay the council for the cost of completing the jobs so quickly. After all, it would only cost a small fraction of the enormous personal rebates, expenses and benefits he receives.

A STRANGE sight has greeted motorists in the city's Broad Street between the building sites of the city's much-vaunted International Convention Centre and the Hyatt Hotel.

The "high-tech" bridge linking the two has a big hole in its glass cladding and is blocked-off at both ends. Inquiries reveal that the glass envelope has been designed nine feet too short, even though the length of the bridge is right.

The mistake could cost up to £100,000 to put right, so the planning department is trying to put the blame on the Hyatt Hotel. Meanwhile, the luxury hotel's guests will have to brave one of Birmingham's busiest and dirtiest roads to get to the centre — another fine advert for England's second city.

STAFFORDSHIRE

MORE WOE for Staffordshire County Council — this time involving Labour leader Bill Austin who is at odds with party members over a £50,000 grant to set up a drama school in Burslem.

Arty-socialist types in the north Midlands hit upon the idea of setting up a drama college, the Northern School, to be run in Burslem as a charitable trust. Various party hacks came forward as trustees and the principal was to be Iain Ormsby-Knox, chairman of Hartshill Labour Party in Stoke.

He, however, made the mistake of taking on face value a promise from Austin that public funds would be available to help set up the school. Austin, allegedly witnessed by three people, promised £50,000 of council funds by the end of the financial year and on the strength of this promise (which included an undertaking to pay £6,000 within two weeks), Ormsby-Knox remortgaged his house and loaned the money to the school project until the policy and resources committee could endorse the grant.

When the committee came to ratify it, the Labour whip failed to materialise and Austin failed to appear. Instead he sent a report suggesting fresh ways to delay the project.

Ormsby-Knox is now preparing for a new role in life in Cardboard City and Ivor Benjamin, who was to be the school's first vice-principal, is also furious, claiming to have turned down "several lucrative job opportunities" to join the school.

Austin blames the unavailability of EEC grants which he had earmarked for the school and the discovery that "four major committees are well over their estimates". In a letter to the secretary of the Friends of the School he wrote: "I am sorry I can not deliver, but things change from day to day and with the best will in the world, I nor no one else [sic] can foresee such events."

SWANSEA

THE RESIDENTS of sleepy Mumbles, a picturesque fishing village a leek's throw from Swansea, have been awoken by the crude development plans of Swansea city council.

The Labour-controlled authority, run by the often tired and emotional Tyssul Lewis (*Eye* 744), has angered Mumbles' residents by joining with obscure leisure outfit Bright and Pepper to build a grandiose tourist "attraction". The planned development could block a particularly beautiful vista of the bay and islands in the middle of the most delightful stretch of the Bristol Channel.

The site first earmarked was the old sea front bus station, previously owned by Swansea city council, West Glamorgan county council and South Wales Transport. Originally the three planned a five-story complex completely out of character with the village. The proposal ran into much opposition.

Developers Bright and Pepper then bought out South Wales Transport's interest and presented an ambitious £24m plan to reclaim more than five acres of land from the sea, divert the main sewer and build a 25-metre swimming pool as well as nightclub, pub, restaurant, shops and 80 £250,000 flats.

The objections continued to pile up. Nearly 300 extra car-parking spaces would be needed, the reclaimed land would intrude on to a site of special scientific interest, the development would be out of scale with the village and obscure the bay. City planners were reminded how only three years before they had bought two houses on the front for £80,000 and demolished them to improve the view!

Bright and Pepper then offered its share of the land to Swansea council if the city would buy out the county council's for £500,000 and lease the land back to Bright and Pepper for 99 years with no rent payable for the first 13. In return, the council would get £3.2m worth of leisure facilities while building a £1m multi-storey car park in a nearby disused quarry.

By last June, however, Bright and Pepper came up with another ingenious scheme. The bus station site could not be redeveloped, after all, since it had been built on boulders on reclaimed land, and so the planners moved down the bay to destroy a site of special scientific interest.

Locals are now pressing Swansea to buy out Bright and Pepper's interest and develop the site on a low-key scale.

POLICE 5

GREATER Manchester Police's attempts to wish away the notorious Ged Corley affair (*Eyes passim*) have been dashed by two new developments. Four months after Corley was released from a 17- year jail sentence for allegedly supplying weapons to criminals, the black constable at the centre of the affair has been charged with fraud.

Meanwhile, five others have been charged before Wakefield magistrates with attempting to pervert the course of justice by making false statements to police regarding Corley. One of the five is well-known Manchester "supergrass" Brian Sands who has also been charged with perjury.

Sands is currently serving an 18-year sentence for armed robbery, commuted to eight years after he blew the lid off Manchester's armed robbery circuit to grateful cops. But the case of another of the five, Joseph McMahon, should have criminologists buzzing for years. McMahon has been charged with falsely pleading guilty to a crime he didn't commit!

Corley was jailed last year after Sands claimed in court that he had bought a gun from him. Yet Corley was released within a year after police revealed how they had failed to tell the jury that

Sands's gang had confessed to planting incriminating evidence on Manchester coppers.

The gang told police how they had tried to set up a black Manchester constable by hiding a gun in his attic. They had also extracted hairs from his pillow, inserted them into a ski-mask and left it at the scene of an armed robbery where it was nabbed by eagle-eyed forensics.

Unsurprisingly, once Corley's lawyers found out about these remarkable revelations about the framing of the black copper, the case against him collapsed, almost overnight. Now, however, the copper has been arrested on charges of alleged fraud after a police phone tap recorded him submitting a compensation claim.

West Yorkshire Police, who were brought in by the Police Complaints Authority to investigate the Corley affair, are awaiting with trepidation the outcome of this case. If the PC is convicted then suspicion will be cast on the gang's claims that he was an unwitting "victim" of their conspiracy. West Yorks are also about to haul in Chief Superintendent Arthur Roberts for questioning. Roberts, who was in charge of prosecuting Corley, is one of seven GMP officers already suspended for their part in the affair. This one looks set to run and run.

Letters

Post dated,

Sir,

I thought that you might like to know how keen our local City Fathers are to ensure that we all pay our fair share of the poll tax.

A poll tax letter and form came addressed to my father, but I returned it to the City Dept as stated on the envelope with a note that my father had died some two weeks ago.

A few days later, the same letter came back in another envelope with a note on the envelope "Please Forward".

As I was not sure exactly where my father had gone to after he died, I sent this letter to the Southampton Head Post Office explaining that he had died and I did not know his exact address, but perhaps they could forward the letter on.

Time went on and nothing was heard from the city fathers until one day a letter arrives at my address, addressed to The Late Mr Andrew Desmond and in my curiosity I opened this letter only to find that it contains a summons for him to suffer anymore, as he would now be over 85 years of age if he were still alive.

His death can be proved by the death certificate and also the Royal South Hants Hospital where he died and of course the undertaker's and crematorium where he was cremated, but should I have to attend court and do you think that they will believe me that he is dead, or should I have to produce some other evidence to substantiate my claim of his death?

Any advice you can give me will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully,
PETER DESMOND
(Son of the late Andrew Desmond),
Bassett, Southampton.

Lookalike

Jagger **Hyde**

Sir,

There seems to be a striking resemblance between Mr Mick Jagger, the convulsing, rubber-lipped Rolling Stone, and Mr Hyde, Dr Jekyll's convulsing, rubber-lipped alter ego in the 1931 movie classic. Are they by any chance related? I think Keith should be told.

Yours,
ROY DEAN,
Bromley, Kent.

Harlow high spots

Sir,

Fame at last.

Humdrum story on Harlow rather amusing.

Harlow Council does not go in for deputy heads of department, they are too costly. We expect our officers to earn their salaries. So who are the mystery six?

Mr Derrick Harman left Harlow Council's employment a fortnight ago — he retired.

Administrators, including deputy returning officers, are not very well known for serving coffee, be it in plastic cups or anything else.

I am surprised that you would condone a local government officer claiming expenses for umpiring a cricket match in the Midlands when his place of work is Essex.

"Disgruntled staff" (two if you want to count the cat) have also complained about the District Auditor.

But I must admit the Council did invite Neal [sic] Kinnock to open our local centre. Obviously dear old Margaret should have been welcomed instead.

Right or wrong keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL DANVERS,
Harlow Council.

COME DRINK WITH GAZZA

Earn your spurs as a hard hitting news reporter for international Freighting Weekly, a leading transport-related tabloid newspaper situated just yards from the wine bar frequented by Paul Gascoigne.

Advert. Grauniad Media

Poo he?

Sir,

This may be tough for you lame brains to understand, but "Gal Gonad" was no more Garry Bushell than "Loadsamoney" was Harry Enfield.

Gonad was, and was always understood to be, a satirical creation. A Yob send-up rather than a Yob celebration.

Yours,
CHRISTINE COUSINS
(former reviewer, Punk Lives),
Mottingham, Kent.

PS: Whatever happened to Stinky Turner?

Outnumbered

Sir,

To anyone who knows anything about the history and practice of IQ tests and testing, Dr Rex Haig's letter (Eye 745) can be seen to be tilting at windmills.

Far from having a "theoretical background in eugenics, racial supremacy .... etc, IQ tests were invented by Binet as a tool for rescuing from the stigma of mental retardation children who had been incarcerated in asylums in Paris. Ever since, both the theory and practice of intelligence testing has been based on the idea of creating a useful tool by which to better educate and train children and adults, of all abilities.

Dr Haig criticises IQ tests for "not giving much measure of human worth"! This implies, firstly, that they are supposed to be or purport to be, such a measure, which is manifestly not the case, and secondly that he thinks "a measure of human worth", if it really were one, would be a good thing to have. I wonder what Dr H. would do with it if he had it? I shudder to think.

One may as well attack the manufacturers of bathroom scales on the grounds that bodily weight is not much of a measure of human worth.

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER PADLEY,
Market Rasen, Lincolnshire.

O.B.N.

RESHUFFLE SPECIAL

Mrs Currie: May I say that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is looking jolly nice today? Does she agree that this is a time of great celebration? As she has observed, it is the end of the cold war. Does she not also agree that while we celebrate we should not be complacent about the peace.

Hansard

Few men, I would venture to suggest, are as considerate as Mr Denis Thatcher, who, when asked by a reporter on his first day at No. 10 'Who wears the trousers?', replied 'I do — and I also wash and iron them.'

ANGELA RUMBOLD

Speech to Congress for the Family

Submitted by Dan Clifton, David Smith.

£10 paid for all entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

... and Bah

Sir,

If HRH Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother were really such a chocolate aficionado (Diary, Eye 746), then surely she would know that "Snickers" is the new name for Marathon.

Yours pan-Europeanly,
GEORGE DUKE,
Chorley, Lancashire.

Sugar lumps

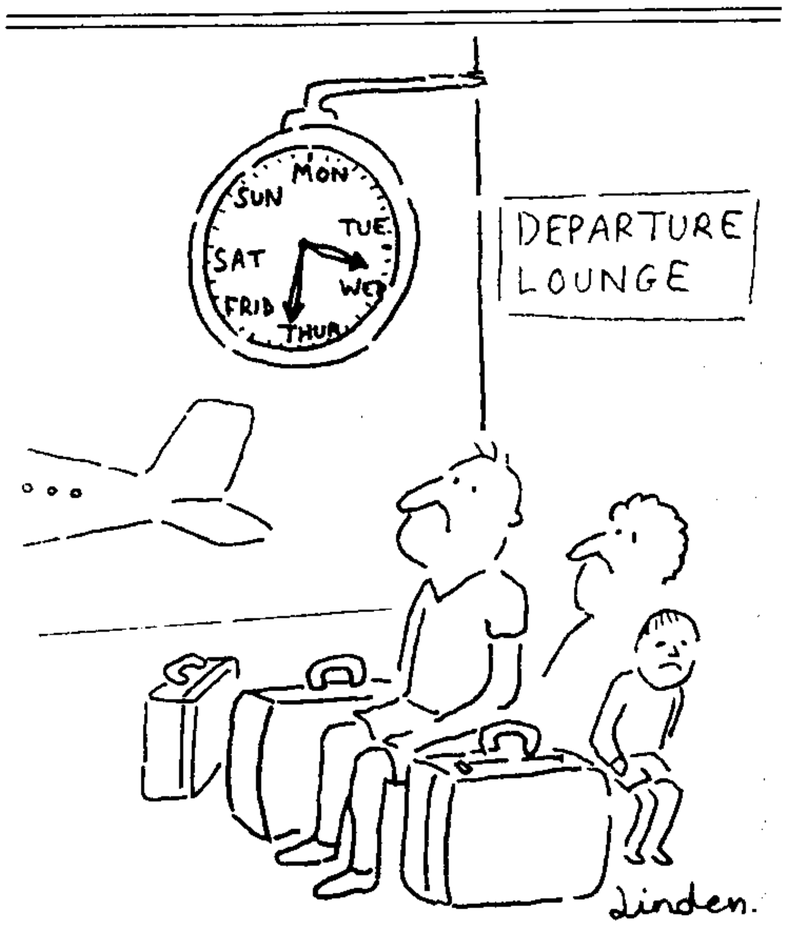
Sir,

I was intrigued by Roger Stern's alleged sabotage attempt of Sizewell with salt.

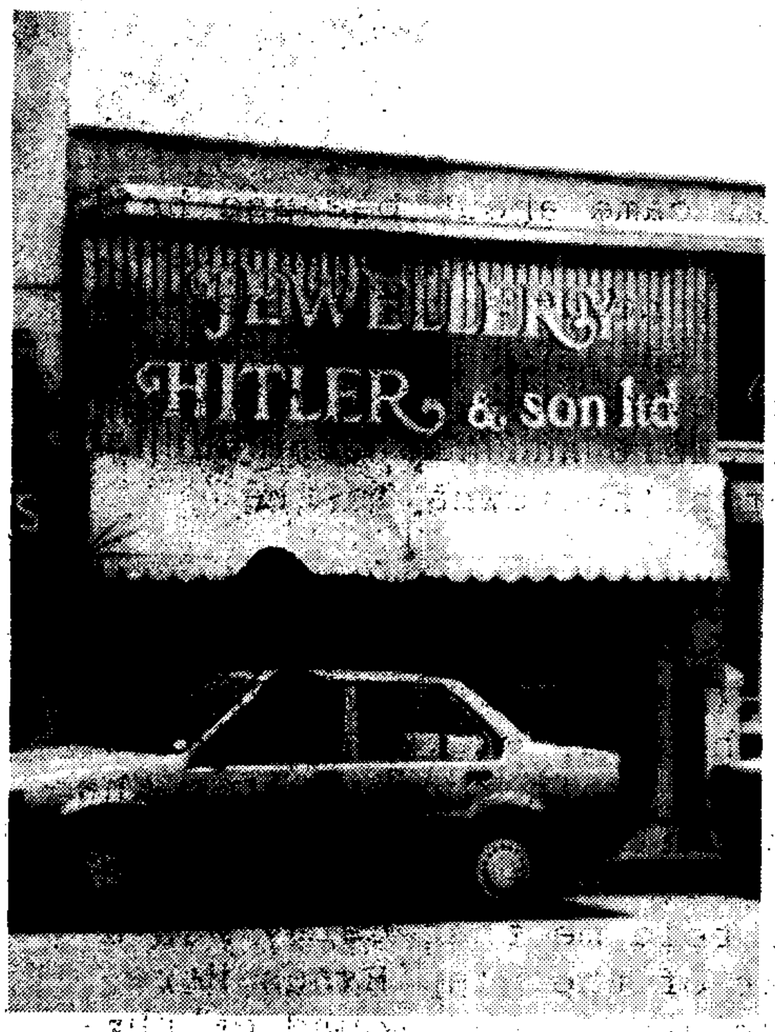
According to "Properties of Concrete" by A.M. Neville, Pitman Books 1981, third edition, "...sugar, say 0.2%... weight of cement, will virtually prevent the setting of cement."

Sugar comes in nice soft paper bags weighing two pounds, as opposed to salt, usually in hard packs of small weight. One wonders what would happen if either were thrown into a concrete mixer?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID BLACK,
Redland, Bristol.



I-SPY *Cyprus*



Submitted by Richard Piper. £10 paid for similar submissions. (*SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.*)

Wicket keeper

Sir,

At the risk of being pedantic I wish to correct you on a matter of fact in your item on David Sheppard in Eye 746. Although "The Rev" made three double-centuries for either Cambridge University or Sussex during his first-class career, his top score for England was in fact 119, made against India at the Oval in August 1952. However, in view of the wholly inaccurate nature of items 1-7 in the neighbouring piece on Bobby Robson I suspect that the whole article was intended to be read with a certain amount of incredulity.

Yours faithfully,
ALLAN DRAYCOTT,
London N4.

European Monetary System

Sir,

Recently, those of us who pass the offices of the European, just off New Fetter Lane, couldn't help noticing the application of the latest high-technology sales technique, namely a trestle table bearing a huge pile of unsold newspapers and a saucer with the label "50p please".

One thing worried me, however. On my way to lunch today there was £1 in the saucer, but by the time I returned from buying a sandwich, there was only 10p.

What could this possibly mean?

ARNOLD BATT,
London, N1.

Tally ho

Sir,

With regard to the article "Hunt News" (Eye 746) — hunt saboteurs can only hope to be treated fairly once they can convince the powers that be that they are genuinely concerned for animal welfare.

From my experience, they are mainly formed from the same anarchic rent-a-mob who attend poll tax riots or whatever the latest anti-establishment cause happens to be.

The "old school tie" brigade at the CPS are most unlikely to take seriously the pleas of the great unwashed against their chums from the local hunt.

If "antis" were as cunning as the foxes, then they would realise this!

K. JENKINSON,
Stevenage, Herts.

Bore Score

Sir,

Given the competition from old campaigners such as Larry Adler, I doubt whether Keith Flett merits a place as one of the all time Top Ten Bores among your correspondents, as Peter Friar suggests (Eye 746).

In fairness to Keith, however, it should be said that his letters also appear with tedious frequency in your great satirical contemporary, the Grauniad, making him a strong contender for the all-rounders spot in any present-day team selected to bore for England.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT HEYS,
Holywell Green, Halifax.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Homelessness is homelessness no matter where you live."
GLENDA JACKSON, Radio Scotland
(Ian M. Elroy)

"I was just one of the boys, literally."
RACHEL HAYHOE-FLINT, BBC Radio 4
(W.H. Jarvis)

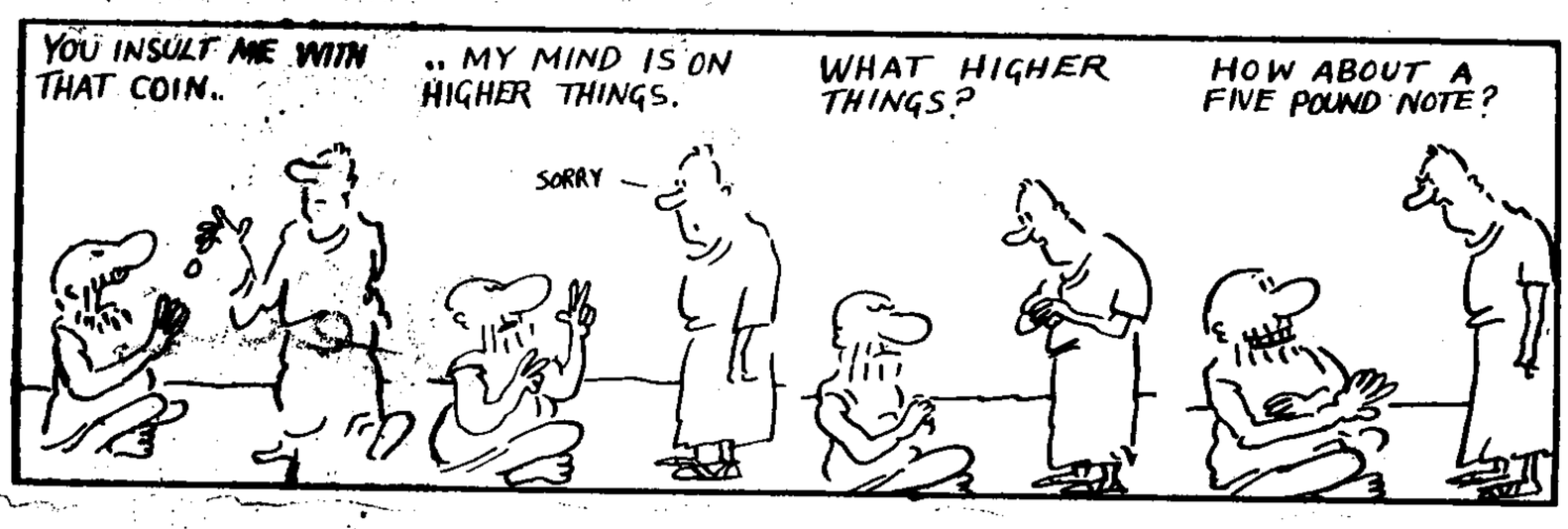
"And no one's ever won The Open three times. It's been won four times and two times, but never in its history has it been won three times."
U.S. GOLF COMMENTARY
(Minos Mauris)

"Kratzmann is now letting Chang play his own game — and he does that better than anyone."
CHRISTINE JANES, Radio 2
(John Hendry)

"...and this after three false starts — well, two false starts and one faulty start..."
DAVID COLEMAN, BBC1
(Adrian Cross)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from

Buenos Aires

from Our Own Correspondent

A CHORUS of "We wuz robbed" still echoes around the city following our pitiful showing at the World Cup, reinforcing the age-old national psychosis that the whole world has conspired against heroic Argentina.

Our own "effluent tendency" in football — Peronist youth attached to Boca Juniors and other clubs — have taken their lead from our fearless leader, Calamity Carlos. Addressing the nation with the team from the balcony where Galtieri made his drunken celebration of war back in 1982, Menem told the nation to celebrate "as we would a victory because in reality Argentina won".

The self-delusion — which neatly avoids any mention of our shameful performance and the two sendings-off — is daily more essential for survival here. As it becomes steadily more and more clear that this is *not* a European state somehow stranded in Latin America by one of those Maradonna-style Hand of God pieces of misfortune, the barricades against external comparisons become more vital.

Menem was at his Alice in Wonderland mirror again last week assuring the foreign press that Argentina — the state that should have become South America's Australia but ended up its Albania — would be among the top 10 or 20 nations of the world by the end of his term. No one was cruel enough to point out that in terms of GDP and trade volume we are currently ranked 80th — down from 69th a year ago when Menem took power and down from 5th in the early 1940s.

Now inseparably associated with disasters, Calamity Carlos looks like a man well qualified to steer us out of the top 100. From the moment his son was rushed to hospital after a road accident within hours of his father's accession, Carlos's reputation as the kiss of death has been growing.

Two cabinet ministers and the governor of his home province of La Rioja have met totally unexpected ends within hours of meetings with shhh..., you know who, as they now say on the streets. Industrialists now blame the loss of crucial million-dollar orders on surprise official visits and sports stars have lost form, fitness and even limbs after succumbing to the temptation of a photo opportunity with the head of state.

There was the national speed-boat champion who had his arm severed as Carlos' Curse struck... then Sabatini twisted an ankle to be sidelined for more than three months after an exhibition match with the president... the football team failed to score for six months after he had joined in a kick around during training... and everyone knows why Argentina lost to Cameroon in the World Cup...

Undeterred, Carlos is convinced he can defy the unions who put him in power and turn it all around by selling off or even giving away everything even remotely resembling an asset. Heading for the airport, the man from Bell Atlantic of the United States was almost too embarrassed to detail "the generosity of the terms" under which he and his Spanish partners, Telefonica, relieved Carlos of the burdensome state telephone monopoly Entel last month.

In the everything-must-go atmosphere of a closing down sale, it now seems that the sale of Aerolinas Argentinas to Iberia may have been illegal. "Never mind," was the concerned reaction of one government official. "There are still oil concessions, transport concerns, chemical companies and assorted others on the shelf."

All this has, of course, been extremely appealing to creditors, not least because they recognise that in Argentina's case, even more so than the other mega-debtors, it represents the only chance of getting something back for their lost billions.

As Michel Camdessus, IMF director-general, said while visiting Buenos Aires on World Cup final day: "In football, as in economics, there are no miracles. There is effort, there is ability... You have 11 heroes in Rome. You must follow their example." With Captain Carlos playing centre forward, we should manage that with ease.

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

Dear Bill,

If you see Maurice, do tell him how sorry I was that Hanson got there first. Though cast very much in the Maurice mould, friend Hanson has, according to Boris, paid an arm and a leg over the years for his membership of the Party, and Margaret therefore feels obliged to give him first crack of the whip when there's any old iron to be taken away on the back of his horse and cart. She'd already given him his own wavelength to broadcast Musak, much to the annoyance of a lot of the long-haired weirdos, who wanted the air-waves made available for their ghastly Eyetie World Cup warblings.

I saw Wakeham the other night lurching out of the Tea Room, and he said Smarmy Cecil had made such a total balls-up of the whole flotation that they were now desperate for anyone to take it, and were even prepared to offer a very large discount for cash down and no questions asked. My own view, as I told Wakeham while supporting him towards the stairhead, was that the wretched Parkinson was only carrying the can for my little woman, who had been inflamed by a lot of her mad scientist friends into believing that nuclear power stations were the only answer to Scargill.

I fear the new Archbish could turn out to be a wrong 'un. The name of the game, as you probably spotted over a few large ones at the nineteenth, being as you are a keen student of ecclesiastical form, was to stop another Runcie getting the job. Margaret herself had tended to leave this unsaid at C. of E. tea-parties, letting it be known that what she really fancied was something more along the lines of her friend the Chief Rabbi, and Boris, for who time in the era of Glasnost has been hanging somewhat heavily on his hands, was sent off to nobble the Selection Board in the guise of a Russian Orthodox Observer. By dint of a bit of place-card switching, he managed to pack it fairly heavily with Evangelical friends of Margaret's.

I don't know if you remember the occasion that time a man called Monson was elected chairman of the bar committee at the Club. Nobody had ever heard of him, apart from a few fellow gardening enthusiasts in the Tunbridge Wells area and he turned out in the end to be a secret teetotaller who poured his drinks into the grand piano when nobody was looking. It all came about because half the Committee were dead set against Money-Coutts for being a toffee-nosed pratt who never said "Cheers" and the other half believed some absurd rumour about Prosser-Cluff and the lady with the saucer full of half-crowns in the downstairs loo.

Exactly the same thing happened with our friend Carey, a nice enough little man who might (in happier days) have run a small youth hostel, but who wouldn't be able to stop the train running into the buffers. I was talking to a fellow-[illegible] chum of Rosalind Runcie's at Ry[illegible] dinner night, and he told me that Carey was a paid-up member of the Clap Hands Here Comes Jesus Brigade, very sound on the shirt-lifters, but given half a chance he'd have spotlights and soft furnishings in Westminster Abbey, hymns accompanied by Troys and his Mandoliers, and Deaconesses dancing down the aisle.

I did in point of fact have the opportunity of pressing the Archi-episcopal Flesh when he called in to be given his seals of office. I am afraid I identified him as a mug when, after ten minutes with the Boss, he emerged to tell the reptiles that he thought M. was "a very spiritual person". When I told the Major he laughed so much he almost swallowed his false teeth.

Any chance of your joining us for Annual Manoeuvres in Cornwall? Ingham and the Pit Stop Boys are planning to dismantle Margaret right down to the chassis for the Autumn Counter-Attack with the help of Madame Veronique from Shepherd's Bush – you probably remember the woman who tried to run three hundred volts through my goolies in exchange for six hundred quid – and a team of psychoanalysts and body-builders, so there should be ample time for me to be sprung with a view to toddling round the links and relishing the Club Elderflower Knockout.

By the way, we all had a good laugh at that Mellor being made Min. of Arts and Farts. Pushy little sod had been hoping to get into the Cabinet, but the Boss had marked his card ever since he failed to use the SAS to blast Strangeways apart, and I'm glad to say she doesn't consider ballet dancers worthy of discussion in the Cabinet Room.

Yours in the leotard on points,

Denis

TRUE STORIES

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE

Illuminated by BERT KITCHEN

DURING his interview, Sergeant Ignatius Zizhquill of the Mozambique CID said: "When I saw Boy Motsa (53) — who everyone knows is a lazy good-for-nothing — in a new Toyota Cressida, with a sun-roof, I was puzzled because the number plate and papers were right. Then I saw that, if they were right, the car should have been ten years old. Boy Motsa explained this gap by saying that his uncle, Sherrif Motsa — a local witchdoctor — had given him a jar of car-rejuvenator ointment. He gave the Cressida a good rub over with the rejuvenator and the car regained its first glory.

"I then asked him to demonstrate the ointment on the police vehicle I was driving at the time, and he said that the ointment would only work on Toyotas and he had, in any case, used it all up."

QUESTIONED as to whether they knew that the warehouse being built in front of the cottages at Tre Mare, Llandudno, would, when finished, be all that the cottagers could see from their parlour and bedroom windows, Councillor E. Roberts said: "We studied the plans carefully but it was not until the steel frame went up that we realised their view of the River Conway and the mountains would be obliterated."

Chief Planning Officer Robert Newton said: "If it had been apparent to experts that the 25 foot high walls were going to spoil the outlook there is an argument that we would have asked for it to be lower, but it is very very difficult to predict how a warehouse will appear from every vantage point."

REPRIMANDING the Dublin Bus Company for its failure to replace its old vehicles, Circuit Judge Frank Martin said: "Mrs Mary Fitzpatrick, aged 84, was half shaken to death when one of their Number 13s hit a pothole. Fortunately for Dublin Bus she survived and has shared the secret of her longevity with us today, which is 'keep smiling'."

Mr Christmas Hogan, a retired builder, speaking for Mrs Fitzpatrick, said: "I have ridden on those vehicles. Often I have been unable to pay the conductor because the juddering made me stutter and the bouncing made him forget the fare. On one occasion a traveller's teeth leapt from his mouth and into the shopping-basket of the lady sitting in front of him."

Dublin Bus was made to pay £4000 to Mrs Fitzpatrick.

AN ENQUIRY at Camp Blanding, Nebraska, heard Captain Pauline Geraci, a Public Affairs Officer of the US Marine Corps, say: "Colonel Erickson was leading his 600-plus Special Assault Unit on a hard survival run when a deer bounded out of the wood and knocked him flat. It just leapt out, feet up-curled, and stunned the Colonel in mid-flight.

"He was unconscious for twenty-two minutes. When he came round, Sergeant Roscoe Maturity found that the Colonel's hair was full of deer-fluff."

WHILE debating the Dog Tax Ordinance Bill (Amendments), the South African Parliament heard the Conservative Party (Animal Affairs) spokesman, Mr Cehill Pienaar (Heilbron) say:

"This Bill is prejudiced against white-owned dogs and is a typical example of Nationalist twisting. Since the repeal of section 16 of the Immunity Act, a white owner has no redress against his dog being visited by a non-white-owned dog."

This statement was greeted by cries of "Sit!" and "Go walkies!" by the majority of members present. When Mr Jan van Eck asked: "Is animal apartheid really necessary?" Mr Pienaar replied: "The matter is too important for questions."

The motion was carried. Animal apartheid is no more.

MONITORS: Swaziland Times 15.5.90; North Wales Weekly News 24.5.90; Irish Times 31.5.90; New York Times 24.10.89.

INFORMATION: Anon, Bertha Williams, K. Macinnes, Sylvia Huthwaite, Rex Brown.

TOP TEN BORES

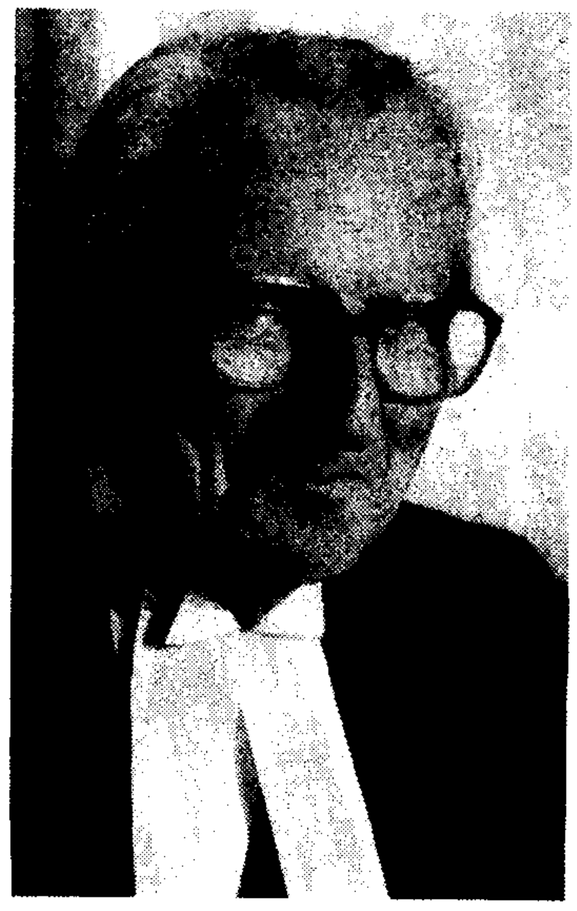
This Week		Last Week	Weeks on List
1	Professor Norman Stone	—	—
2	Nick Faldo	2	2
3	Clive James	7	112
4	Peter Cole	—	1
5	Baroness Blackstone	10	22
6	Woody Allen	6	639
7	Nigel Kennedy	4	21
8	Glenda Jackson	9	11
9	Julian Clary	8	10
10	Gerald Kaufman	5	378

We would like to thank the **editorial staff of the *New Statesman and Society* magazine and the Eurotunnel Consortium for their help in compiling this week's Bores.**

A High Court Judge writes

Every week a High Court judge is invited to comment on an issue of topical importance.

This week: **Jim Miskin (cab no. 737423)**



D'you see they let out those Guildford Four? Bloody madness — they were obviously guilty otherwise they wouldn't have banged them up it's obvious innit? Them wogs got the right idea, if you ask me, chop their 'ands off, you'd soon see the jails emptyin' if we was to do the same. It's all wrong over 'ere, some poor bloke gets 6 years from me just for choppin' up 'is missis whereas they let out these Irish blokes who may not have done it but are still guilty. I mean, these rapists, it's not their fault is it? They must 'ave bin provoked. It's like all the blacks, they're guilty. I tell you what I'd do with the lot of 'em — string 'em up! It's the only language I understand. I only do this nights, I've retired now.

NEXT WEEK: Lord Donaldson.

Scandal rocks Wildlife Fund

by W.W.F. Deedes

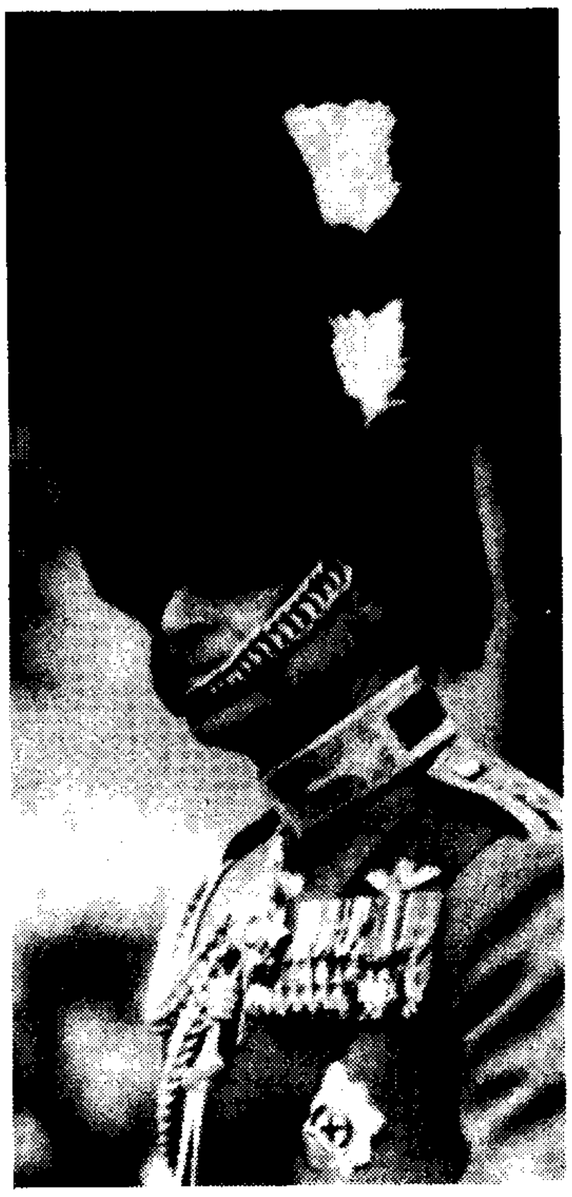
Millions of pounds have been squandered trying to preserve one of the world's most endangered species, according to a top secret report leaked to Central TV's hard-hitting *Fatso Report*.

According to Professor Bamboo Gascoigne from the University of Challenge, New Dworkin, the Government has simply "thrown money" at the species in "an uncoordinated and ill-managed fashion".

PandaMonium

The most flagrant example of mismanagement concerns attempts to preserve the only known Duke of Edinburgh in existence.

This peculiar specimen traditionally walks along behind its mate with its hands clasped behind its back.



When approached, the Duke is likely to issue barking noises or cries, such as: "Bugger off, Slit-Eyes!" and "Why can't the working classes pull their fingers out?"

Said a Government wildlife spokesman: "This is a magnificent creature and we have a duty if we can to keep him going. If that takes millions of pounds, then so be it."

Prince Phillip is 73.

Queen Mother 90th Birthday Commemorative Newspaper Offer

Lord Gnome is proud to offer *Private Eye* readers a colourful souvenir of a day of history in the making — the Queen Mother's 90th birthday on 4 August 1990. In years to come your children and your children's children will treasure this unique memento: your personal copy of the world famous *Independent* newspaper's coverage of this great day.

Birthdays

Major-General A.P.K. Barkworth-Smythe, 79; Miss Suzie Disco, 21; Sir Campbell Marcus-Brown MP, 57; Her Majesty The Queen Mother, 90; Lord Ronson, 87; Mr Gazza Boot, 31.

DAN DIRE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE?
by HUGH STUN
SOMEWHERE ON NIMBY-III THE RIDLEX OF QUARG POURED FORTH HIS NOXIOUS GAS. . .
...FAT, SAUSAGE-GUZZLING, GOOSE-STEPPING, QUEUE-BARGING, WARMONGERING, QUALITY CAR PRODUCING, SQUAREHEAD HUNS...
VE HAF VAYS OF MAKING YOU NOT TALK. YOU'RE SACKED!
HE WAS RIGHT. GERMANY WAS DANGEROUS. PARTICULARLY TO HIS CAREER.
THERE'S NO SMOKER WITHOUT BEING FIRED.
BUT ON THE MINING COLONY ON THE MOONS OF NUM THERE WAS SKULLDUGGERY AFOOT. . .
WHERE'S THE MONEY, SCARG-FACE?
IT'S MINERS, ALL MINERS! HA HA!
FHI HO IT'S OFF TO JAIL YOU GO
MR. FENN
START DIGGING, SKARGON... INTO YOUR POCKETS!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL A RICH SEAMY!
MEANWHILE COLONEL DAN DIRE HAD CROSSED THE INKY VOID TO IMPRESS THE HEAD OF THE GALACTIC STATES. . .
TAKE ME TO YOUR LEADER!
O.K. BUD. YOU'VE GOT HALF AN HOUR.
I KNOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER, COLONEL. I'M GOOD WITH USELESS IDIOTS CALLED DAN.
YOU SEE, IT'S A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP! HE REMEMBERS MY NAME!
THE EVEN MORE EVIL MAGGON WAS LECTURING TOREENS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE FAMILY. . .
FATHERS SHOULD BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CHILDREN.
RIGHT. LET'S GET THAT BASTARD ALDERMAN ROBERTS.
I BELIEVE IN THE FAMILY.
WHY DON'T YOU SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOURS?
BY THE TWO MARRIAGES OF DENIS!
THE VENUSIAN ARCH-FIEND DESPERATELY RESHUFFLED HER CRONIES IN THE HOPE OF STEMMING THE TURNING TIDE.
THESE ARE ALL NAMES TO REMEMBER. THERE'S THE FAT ONE, YOU KNOW, WITH THE GLASSES, LOOKS LIKE SID LITTLE, ONLY WITHOUT THE TALENT — AND HER WITH THE HAIR — AND THAT GREY ONE... WHATSISNAME?
IT'S THE BLIND LEADING THE BLAND.
SEE! THERE'S A WEALTH OF TALENT ON THE BACKBENCHES.
YOU SHOULD KNOW. YOU FIRED THEM.

THE Sun

TEN WAYS TO SPOT THE NEW COCKNEY ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

1 Talks like Derek Jameson.
2 Wears a cloth cap under his mitre.
3 Supports the Gunners.
4 Will crack down on Pulpit Pooftahs.
5 In favour of ordaining Page 3 lovelies.
6 Likes Dire Straits and Chas 'n' Dave.
7 Has Bible printed on recycled paper.
8 Owns rottweiler called Satan.
9 Eats whelks.
10 Widely respected scholar and theologian *(shurely shome mishtake? Ed.)*

Scargill slams Maxwell over 'secret funds'

by Our Financial Staff
Tony Banks, John Lloyds, Nathaniel West, and Anna Coutts

Mr Arthur Scargill today said he had conclusive proof that Mr Robert Maxwell had opened several secret bank accounts in Liechtenstein, Panama and the Cayman islands where millions of pounds had been secreted.

Mr Maxwell was, he claimed, the sole signatory of these accounts which were never audited or made public. The secret account entitled IMO (International Maxwell Organisation) received contributions, Scargill alleged, from a number of Iron Curtain countries.

The money, said Scargill, should have gone to the workers at Pergamon Press, but they had not seen a penny of it during their long and bitter strike.

Instead, Mr Maxwell had bought himself an expensive helicopter, a Soho lawyer, several football clubs, a ton of caviar and a luxury European newspaper.

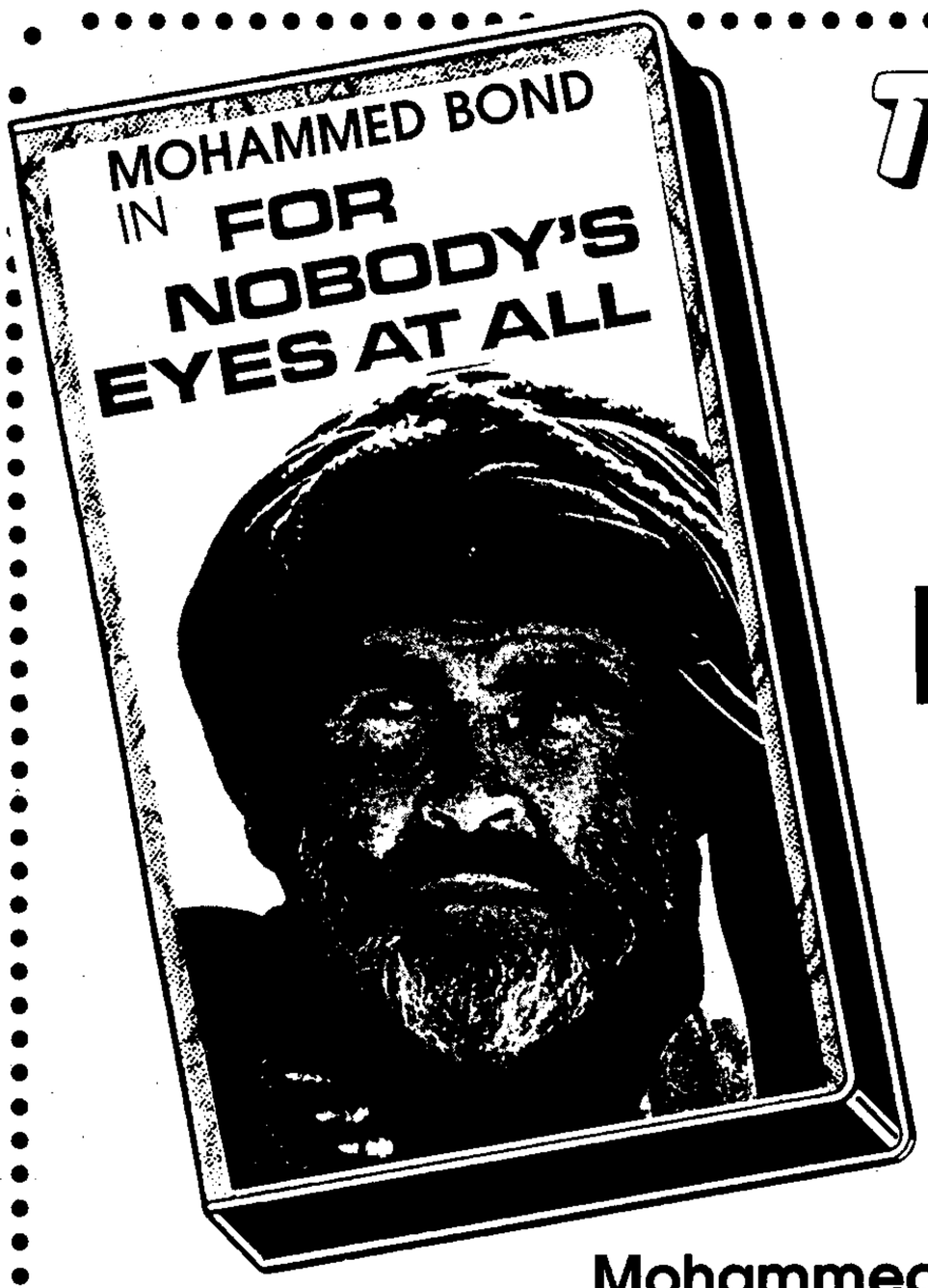
Last night, Mr Maxwell announced an independent inquiry into himself to be conducted by Mr Joseph Haines, a distinguished toady.

New from the Eye

Yes, It's Royal Academy of Arts Summer Exhibition Rhyming Slang!

R.A.	**More to pay**
Anthony Green	**Mildly obscene**
Animal print	**Makes a mint**
Boardroom portrait	**Fourth-rate**
One to be missed	**Abstract Expressionist**
Catalogue	**Bog**
Reclining nude	**Not much good**
Little red sticker	**Bought by a vicar**
Casson, Sir Hugh	**Not much of a queue**
Peter Blake	**Could be a fake**
Not that great	**Carel Weight**
Couldn't be duller	**Greek watercolour**
Elizabeth Frink	**Could do with a drink**
Patricia O'Brien	**You're right, I'm dying**

(That's enough slang. Ed.)



TOOTING VIDEOS PRESENT

MOHAMMED BOND in

FOR NOBODY'S EYES AT ALL

Mohammed Bond is back tougher than ever with his licence to kill from the Ayatollah.

Mohammed comes up against his old rivals, the Jews, this time headed by feared international blasphemer Salami Rushdiestein. Not content with slaughtering innocent Muslim toddlers, the satanic Rushdiestein tortures his helpless victims by reading out passages of his book.

It is a job for Bond, Mohammed Bond, with his friend Martini, Sheik Nbhat Notstirred. Together they track down Rushdiestein to his place of hiding on *The Late Show* talking to Harold Pinter about the future of the novel.

Disguised as Cat Stevens, Mohammed Bond infiltrates BBC hospitality and plants a pork sausage filled with semtex on the tray.

In a breathtaking climax Inspector Knacker raids your home and confiscates the video so you cannot see the criminal libel contained in the last scene.

"A must!"
Bradford Council of Mosques
"A must not"
British Board of Film Censors

An Open Letter to the Muslim Community

One of Britain's finest traditions is Freedom of Expression, even if we don't agree with what is being said. We respect a man's right to express his views. That is why *The Satanic Verses* is on general sale and we have banned the video *International Guerillas*. We have been advised that the latter constitutes a criminal libel and could result in a breach of the peace, unlike *The Satanic Verses*, the publication of which passed off without incident.

D. Waddington

D. Waddington

THAT THAI DRAMA LATEST

"We were duped"— BIRMINGHAM COUPLE'S CLAIM

by Our Man In A Bangkok Massage Parlour
Auberon Waugh, Editor of *Thais and Thaimen.*

A shocked Birmingham couple last night admitted that they had been the victims of an international story-running racket which had landed them in thousands of pounds worth of trouble.

"These men we met asked us to fly out to Thailand and paid for our tickets. They put us up in posh hotels and offered us sweeteners," said one of the clearly bewildered Midlanders.

"In exchange, all we had to do was talk to them and answer a few simple questions. It became a nightmare when they turned out to be seedy middle-men working for an organisation known as the *Daily Express*. Yes, we were naive. It is easy to see that now, but there is no reason why Lord Stevens should not be locked up for 25 years."

ON OTHER PAGES

Kinnock snubbed by Bush. He was kept waiting for 2 minutes . . . p.7.

Unfunny Kinnock cartoon by Gaf . . . . . .p.17.

"I suppose you know you spoil that god!"

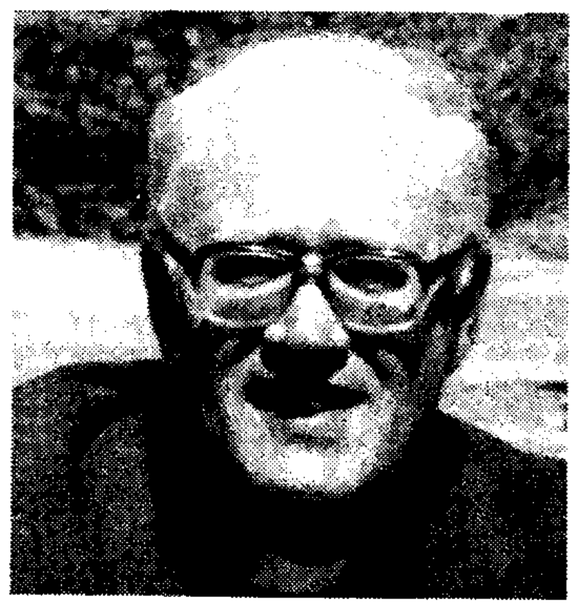
God's Reshuffle

by Our Religious Affairs Correspondent, **B.L.Z. Bub Jr**

In a shock reshuffle last night, the Almighty announced the following dramatic changes:

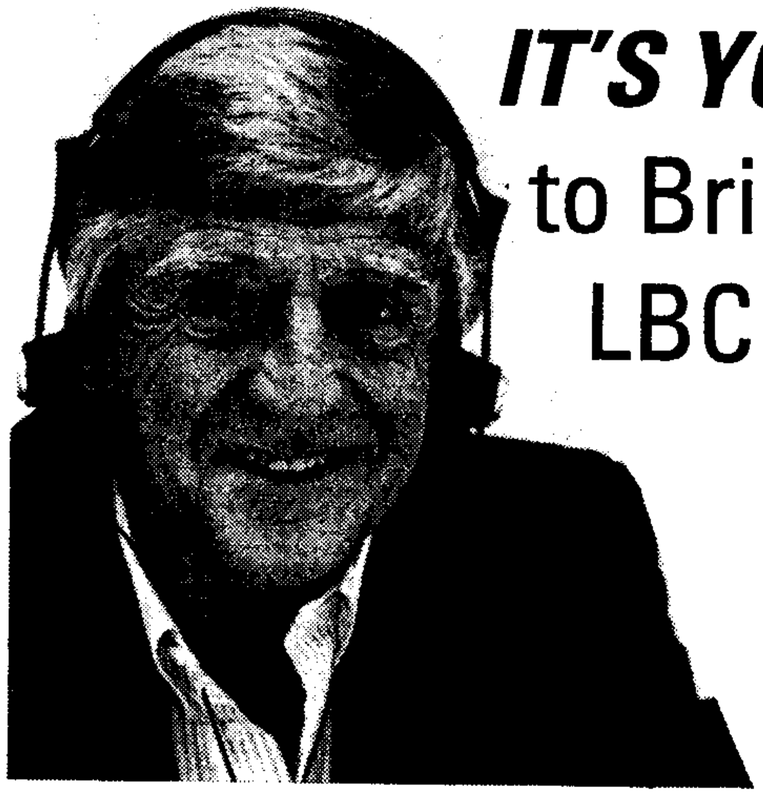
OUT GOES
Fuddy-duddy, woolly liberal, Robert Runcie, 72.

IN COMES
Tough, abrasive, evangelical George Carey, 21.



Celestial sources see the change as an attempt by God to win back support after a period of losing ground to the Opposition.

Opinion polls have shown a drift away by the faithful, and the new moves are clearly designed to "beef up" the Heavenly team before a possible snap Last Judgement.



IT'S YOUR LINE to Brian Hayes LBC Talkback Crown FMZZZ

CALLER: Hello, Brian. It's Sid from Catford. Hello, Brian... Brian?... Are you there? It's Sid... I always ring you up... it's about these corn circles, Brian. I think I know how it's done, Brian... Brian, why haven't you cut me off yet like you usually do?...

PARKINSON: It's Michael Parkinson, you remember me...

SID: Oh, I know you, you banged up Sarah Keays. I rang Brian at the time, told him it was a bloody disgrace. He agreed with me. Where's Brian then?

PARKINSON: No, this is Michael Parkinson. I talk about Barnsley and football and Fred Astaire.

SID: Oh, yes, you're the wheelie man. I talked to Brian about you. Why can't you bloody wheel your dustbin down to the road like anyone else. Who do you think you are? The Archbishop of Canterbury? Talking of which, I was going to mention to Brian that I think they've picked the right bloke for the job. Anyway, tell Brian I called and I reckon you're doing fine manning the switchboard while the secretary's on holiday

(Listeners all switch over to Capital Gold).

POETRY CORNER

Lines on the departure of Mr Peter Bottomley from the Northern Ireland Office.

So, farewell then
Peter Bottomley

Minister for
Northern Ireland.

Curiously,
Nobody
Is replacing
You.

Keith says
You were
Nobody anyway.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Great Bores Of Today.

"...it's amazing they really baffle everyone ten years ago there was just one now there are hundreds of them all over the country no one can explain them everyone's got their own theory of course they could be hoaxes but the circles are too perfect and the corn is completely flattened nothing human could do that those hoaxers last week proved it apparently these two scientists have been studying the phenomenon for their whole lives and frankly they have no idea either all right there's UFOs that's a possibility wind is another one there are these currents which are accentuated by high temperature I saw a whirlwind when I was on holiday once and it *is* a perfect circle but then some of them have straight lines which rules that one out personally the explanation I'm leaning towards is that they are messages from space travellers sent to Stone Age dwellers which is why they only appear near Stonehenge and the messages take so long to arrive that they've only just made it have you seen the pictures of those lines in the desert in South America somewhere? they're miles long there's this book abut them by Eric someone makes you think in the old days they used to believe they were Corn Devils ha ha but this is the twentieth century I'm sure scientists will come up with the answer sooner or later..."

WEATHER

Dry. Some shunshine.
Details — Back Page

Daily Telegraph

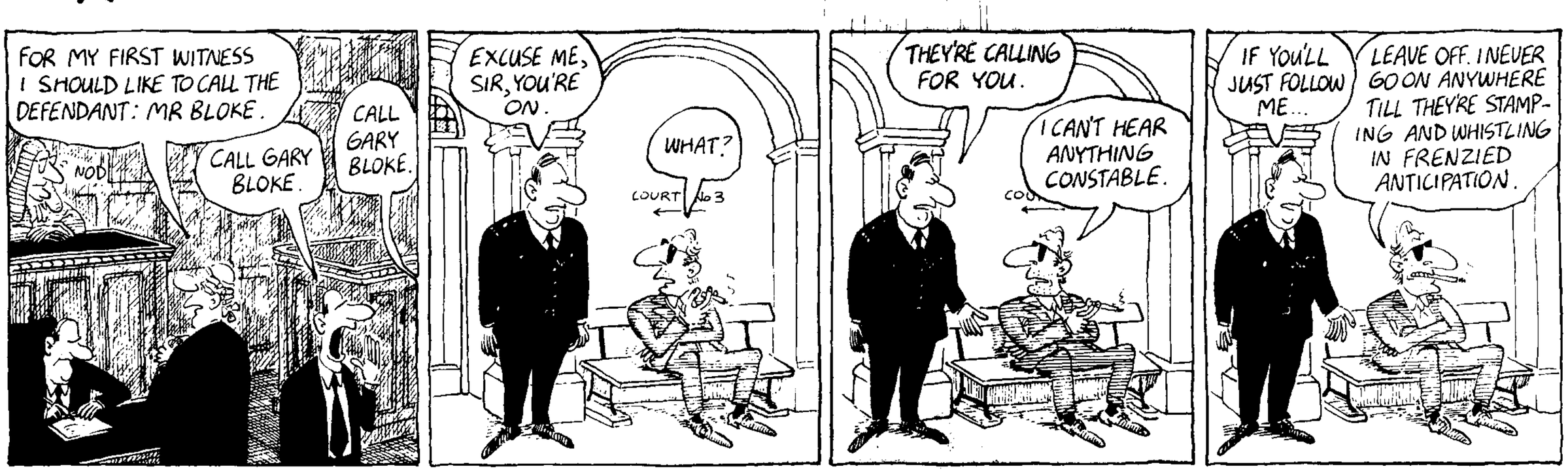
BR regrets...

Passengers for the 8.41 am train from Hartlepool to Darlington yesterday had to travel by taxi because a relief train driver did not know the way.

Daily Telegraph

Celeb

LIGGER


FOR MY FIRST WITNESS I SHOULD LIKE TO CALL THE DEFENDANT: MR BLOKE.
NOD
CALL GARY BLOKE.
CALL GARY BLOKE.
EXCUSE ME, SIR, YOU'RE ON.
WHAT?
COURT No 3
THEY'RE CALLING FOR YOU.
I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING CONSTABLE.
IF YOU'LL JUST FOLLOW ME...
LEAVE OFF. I NEVER GO ON ANYWHERE TILL THEY'RE STAMPING AND WHISTLING IN FRENZIED ANTICIPATION.

Tonight's TV

Strobes: tough talking

8.00pm *The Indy City*

TOUGH Chicago gangland movie featuring Edward Woodward as "Lucky" Whittam-Strobes, the City Road mobster who finds his patch is threatened by Pete "No Readers" Cole and his Correspondent gang.

Trouble starts when "Lucky" goes to Chicago to seek hit men to rub out his upstart rival, but the Chicago boys reveal that they have been backing "No Readers" all along! Not for the squeamish...

CAST IN FULL

Andreas Whittam-Strobes . . . . . .Alistair Sim
Peter Cole . . . . . George Cole
Henry Porter . . . . . Gareth Hunt
Al Capone . . . . . Frank Sinatra
1st Hitman . . . . . Bob Hoskins
2nd Hitman . . . . . Phil Collins
Alexander Chancellor . . . . . Marcello Mastroiani
Hog dog salesman . . . .David Frost

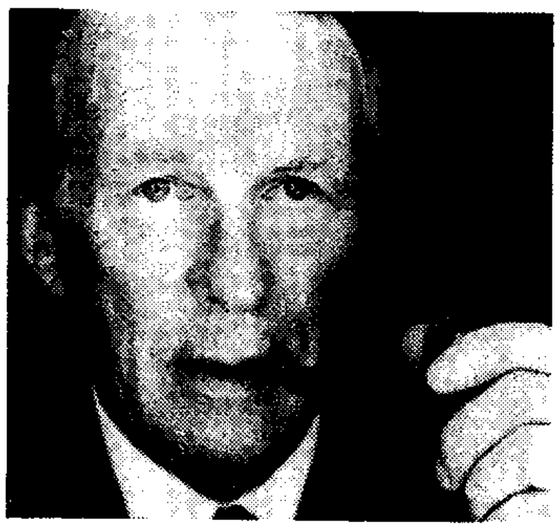
Fresh blood brings sparkle to Thatcher team

by Our Political Staff **Alan Watneys**

In a dramatic shake-up of her ministerial team Mrs Thatcher today introduced an exciting new line-up to carry the party into the next election.

In a series of momentous moves she has transformed her administration from a tired, lack-lustre gallery of over-familiar faces into the most dynamic get-up-and-go squad since Gazza led England to victory in the World Cup.

Who are they, the new men and women who will bring Mrs Thatcher an unprecedented fourth term?



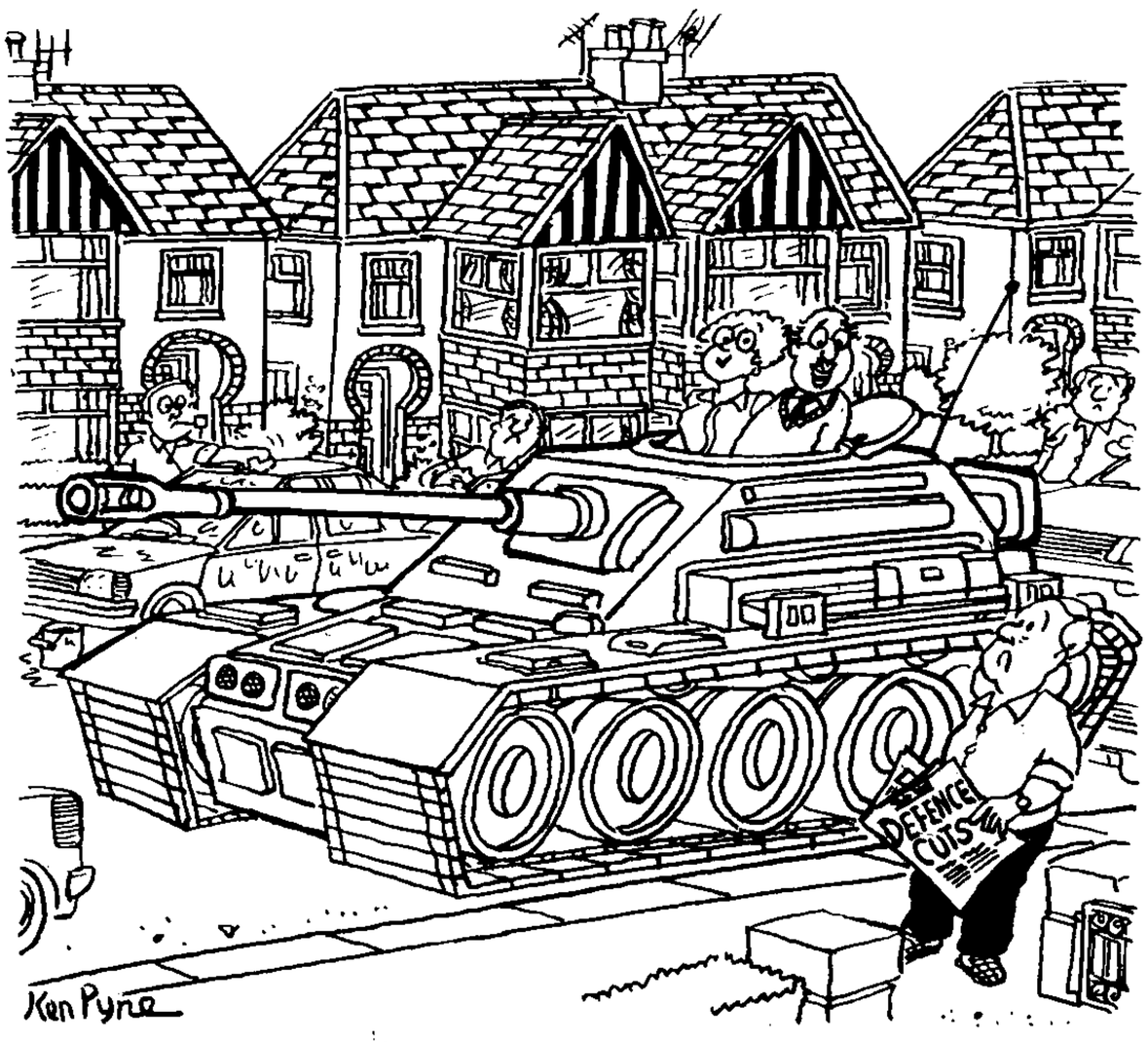
Sir George Young The Younger, 51: Often confused with George "G.K." Young, C.J. Jung and G.K. Chesterton, Sir George is a convinced Thatcherite who supports Mrs Thatcher and was formerly leader of the Young Conservatives.

Graham Dym-Witte, 48: Formerly Junior Under-Secretary in the Whip's office, Dym is a high-flyer who has impressed his Common Market opposite numbers with his grasp of the EEC smoked fish regulations. His promotion to Deputy Under-Secretary (Whip's Office) is a bold move by the Prime Minister.

Lord Biskith, 43: Heir to the Biskith motor car fortune, Lord Biskith has made a name for himself in the upper chamber by staying awake during the afternoon. Biskith is promoted to the key post of Lord High Lord-in-Waiting responsible for paperclips in the office of the Green Cloth.

Mrs Virginia Creeper, 31: One of the few women to be given top-level promotion, Mrs Creeper is admired by Mrs Thatcher for her attention to detail and her vital speech in the debate on the privatisation of *The Listener* magazine bill (2nd reading).

(That's enough Reshuffle, Ed.)



"We got it at the Army & Navy surplus store summer sale!"

THOSE MASSIVE DEFENCE CUTS IN FULL

ARMY	BEFORE	AFTER
Soldiers on the Rhine	50,000	25,000
Soldiers on Salisbury Plain	50,000	75,000
Crop Circles	7	10
Tanks	2,000	1,998
NAVY	**BEFORE**	**AFTER**
Frigates	23	0
Submarines	170	170
Missiles	94	20,860
Sailors	Hello	Ta
AIR FORCE	**BEFORE**	**AFTER**
Tornados	37	3
Phantom	£12.50	£37.50 (Circle only)
CIVIL SERVANTS	**BEFORE**	**AFTER**
All services	13,000	250,000
DIAGRAMS IN NEWSPAPERS	**BEFORE**	**AFTER**
Tanks, planes etc	0	375

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Charles is launching a bold new experiment in organic food.

Now read on...

THE SMELL of bread hung heavy in the newly converted mill at the back of the farm which had lain idle for centuries. Outside a signwriter was putting the final touches to a board which proudly proclaimed HIGHGROVE ORGANIC BAKERY.

Underneath it read in smaller letters "It really is exceedingly good bread".

Charles was delighted with the whole project. It had been his sort of brainchild thing and now, after months of careful planning, the first batch of loaves, made entirely from pure, natural, pesticide-free, manure-enriched, compost-grown wheat stuff, were about to come out of the oven.

"Afternoon, Sire." The solidly built man with the ruddy face and huge ginger beard greeted Charles with a pat on the back that caused him to clutch his bad arm in agony.

It was Charles's master baker, W.B. Yeast himself. "All going to plan, sir," the deep Cotswold burr assured him. "First 200 loaves will be in Tesco's by tomorrow morning."

Tesco's? Charles was sure he knew the name from somewhere. Wasn't it some sort of supermarket place? Hadn't the Duchess Fergiana opened one of those once and been given an inflatable emu for her baby, Princess Kylie?

"But I thought we were going for the alternative market, as it were, the sort of smaller shop... er... Diana's got this friend in Kensington where they do sort of duty-free yoghurts and hand-woven ginseng..."

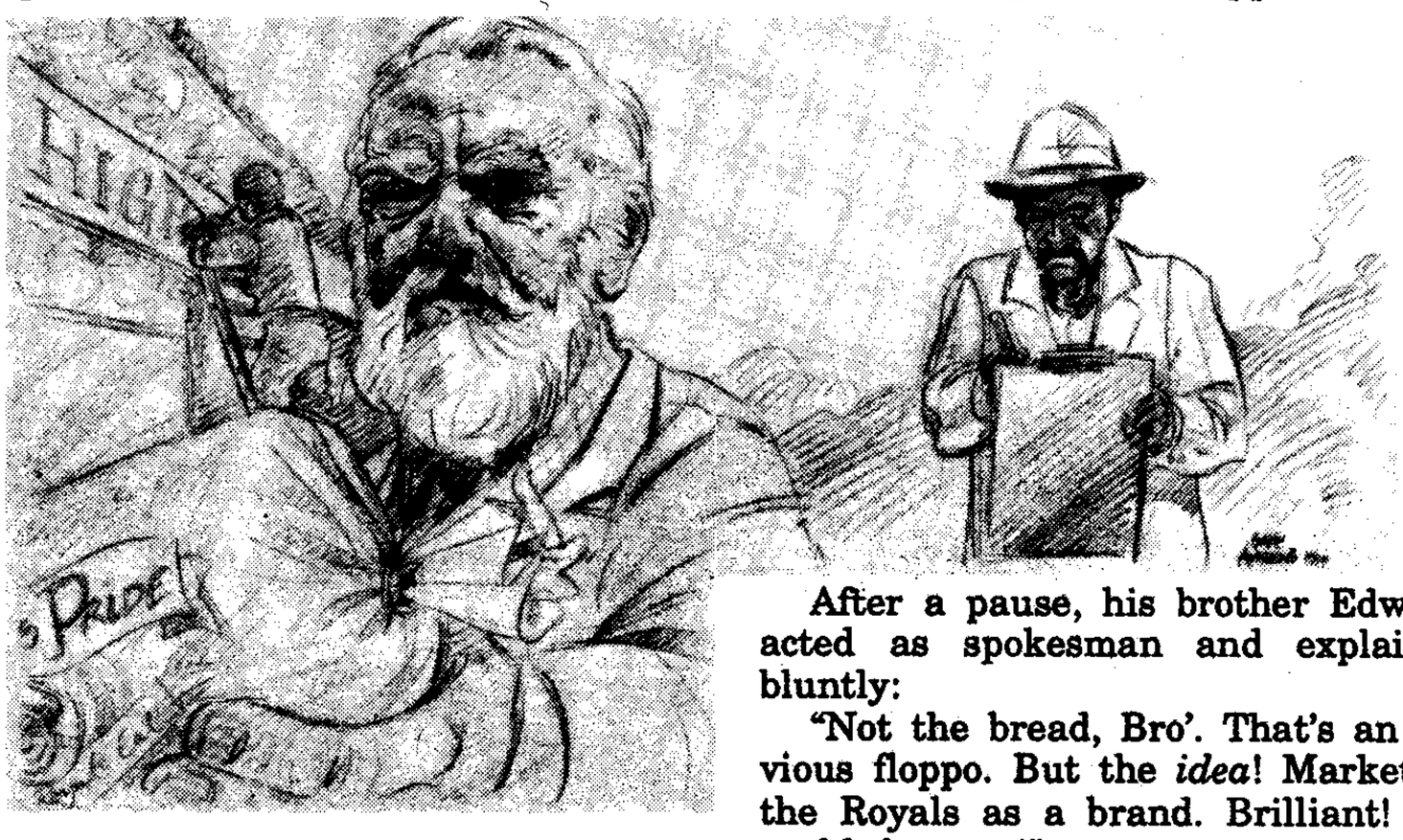
"Don't you worry your royal head about that — Mr Fayed here's got all that side of things sorted out." So saying, the burly baker summoned a small, neat, dark-faced man dressed in a white coat and hat and carrying a clipboard.

"Everything very fine, very good. Plenty mark-up here, Majesty. Long sell-by. Big price, everybody rich."

Oh dear, Charles thought. He didn't want too much emphasis on the commercial side. The important thing was to get the organic message across. The message that had been so neatly encapsulated by his old friend and mentor Sir Laurens van der Post in his book *The Breadmen of the Gobi*. What had he said? "If the oven gets too hot, the bread gets burnt."

How true that was, although he couldn't see its precise wisdom at the moment.

A hooter sounded, and the freshly baked loaves began pouring from the oven on a conveyor belt. A team of young volunteers from the Prince's Inner-City Business Trust immediately wrapped the loaves in day-glo green cellophane.



Mr Yeast took one from the belt and presented it to Charles with an elaborate bow.

"The first Royal Loaf, Sire," he said.

"I hope I haven't done a King Alfred and burnt it," quipped Charles.

"Ha ha ha, Sire!" laughed Yeast, joined by Mr Fayed, who had also failed to understand Charles's jocular reference to his predecessor.

"Ha ha ha. Wrapper very nice, Sire, no?"

Charles read it out loud: "Queen Mother's Pride — The Bread The Royals Eat."

Oh dear, thought Charles again. Was that what they had agreed? He seemed to remember something more tasteful had been suggested. What was Dr Barkworth's idea? "The Highgrove Holistic Loaf." Yes, that had been much more like it.

The ginger-bearded master miller walked Charles to the door.

"Comin' up to tea-time, Sire... Why don't you try it on the family?"

"WONDERFUL, Charles!" "How clever of you." "Inspired." "Fabbo!" Around the tea-table at Highgrove, the family's response seemed to be unanimous.

"Yes, you're right. And it makes terrific toast, I've been told. In fact, I've put some in the oven myself."

Charles was thrilled by his family's response to the bread, although he had noticed that few of them had taken more than a bite of the chunky cucumber sandwiches that he had personally prepared. In fact, only the Duchess Fergiana had consumed a complete sandwich, and indeed had just embarked on several more. Charles continued:

"Organic, you see. Not that white bread that people have to buy. It really is appalling."

"You're right. It *is* appalling." Andrew spat a mouthful onto his plate.

There was a chorus of approval.

"Rather heavy."

"Urgh!"

"Sicksville."

Charles was flabbergasted.

"But I thought you all approved."

After a pause, his brother Edward acted as spokesman and explained bluntly:

"Not the bread, Bro'. That's an obvious floppo. But the *idea*! Marketing the Royals as a brand. Brilliant! We could clean up!"

The Duchess Fergiana joined in.

"Ya, I could do Fergie ski-wear and Budgie's Baby Gear..."

"I could do *Eddie's Hits From The Musicals...*" added Edward.

"I could do hair products!" cried Diana, "and shampoos and beauty treatments. The Princess Collection!" Her eyes lit up with excitement. "They could have my picture on them. I could be the new Coco Chanel. Chazzo, you're a genius!"

Oh dear, Charles thought yet again. He stared in dismay at his family and at the plate of uneaten sandwiches.

Then from the kitchen came the unmistakable smell of burning toast...

To be continued

A Doctor Gachet writes

As a doctor, I am often asked: "Doctor, I have this pain in my ear what is wrong with me?"

The simple answer is that you are stark, raving bonkers or what we doctors call *Loonus Loonus Normalis Artisticus*.

My advice to you, Vincent *mon brave*, is to go away and paint some sunflowers. If you find the symptoms persist, try removing your ear.

©Un Docteur, 1890.

Lone explorer finds 'Abominable Judge'

Sensation at North Pole

by Our Legal Staff **Joshua Rozenbeard**

The famous explorer, Sir Gandalph Wickleten-Twittleton-Huge-Fines *(That's enough names, Ed.)*, **claimed yesterday that on his expedition to find the lost treasure of the libel courts he had inadvertently stumbled upon the famous "Abominable Judge", which many experts over the years have dismissed as a legend.**

Said Sir Geldof: "It was an incredible sight. For many days we had journeyed through dark corridors with a team of bearers behind us carrying heavy briefs on their shoulders.

"Then suddenly we turned a corner and saw this hideous figure in a hairy wig squatting above us on a specially raised platform. I have seen many things in my life, but nothing had prepared me for the mythical 'Abominable Judge' or Bigfootinmouth, as the natives call him."

Sir Ransack's expedition continued to its historic and scientific objective of discovering a huge amount of money buried in a Canadian magazine which no one had ever seen.

Scientists have now given a name to the "Abominable Judge". They will henceforth refer to it as Justicus Michaelus Davus Maximus.

Sir Ranulph

GNOME SUMMER OFFER!

GIRLS! NOW YOU TOO CAN HAVE THE SENSATIONAL NEW LOOK DIANA HAIRSTYLE

Simply send off at once and we will supply you with the complete GNOME HOME DIANA HAIRSTYLE KIT.

It consists of:

1. One pair of scissors
2. Er. . .
3. That's it

I enclose £99.99 (cash only)

Signed .....

To: Gnome Summer Offer, Gnomecon plc, Industrial Estate, P.O. Box 763, Bishops Stortford, Newcastle-onTyne

EXCLUSIVE TO PRIVATE EYE

Mystery of circles solved

by **Nicholas Riddle** and **Bernie Cornfield**

The enigma of the mysterious circles which have been appearing in cornfields throughout Britain has finally been solved by scientists keeping a 24-hour vigil at the sites.

Explanations of the "paranormal manifestations" have ranged from giant fungi to vortex ionisation caused by abnormal dry wind formations. Other less scientific solutions to the riddle have included visitors from another planet or simply hoaxers.

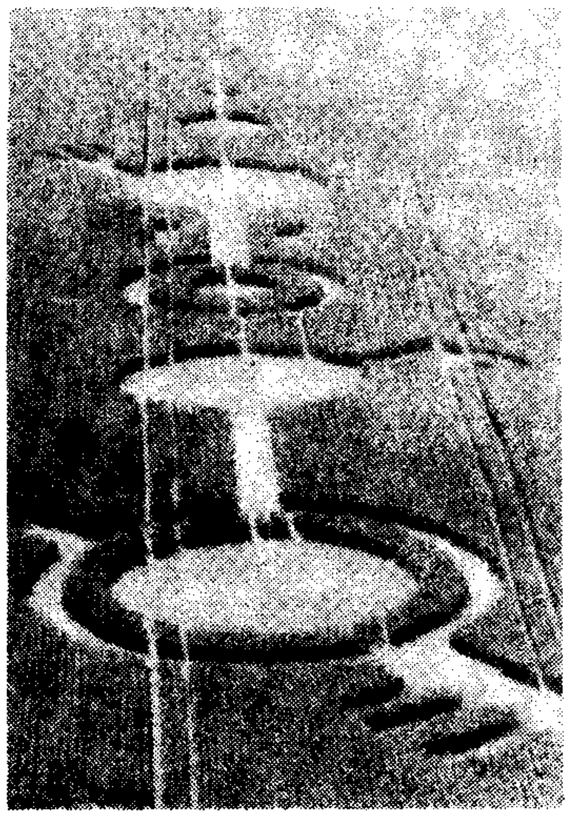
The Fat Man of Wessex

However, teams of observers working with the very latest infrared cameras last night claimed to have finally cracked Britain's most puzzling mystery.

"It was amazing. It was about three o'clock in the morning," said Professor Heinrich von Hovis from the Zurich Institute of Advanced Wheat Studies. "There were these flashing lights and a noise like a helicopter. Then the craft landed and out stepped this huge larger-than-life alien.

"This figure then walked round in circles, stamping down the corn as he went so that it was completely flat."

Professor Hiram B. Sunblest from the New Dworkin College of



Paranormal Bread-Related Phenomena took up the story:

"The Fat Man, as we have called him, spoke in a loud arrogant voice. He was giving orders to his aides, and I recorded a few distinct phrases."

The professor then played his tape-recorder, and the following could be clearly heard:

"This is the ideal site. No one will find it in the middle of the field. We can hide millions of unsold copies of *The European* here. Bring them in the night and dump them."

Robert Maxwell is 103.

Oil, oil, everywhere...

Berkin.

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THAT TRELFORD CITATION IN FULL

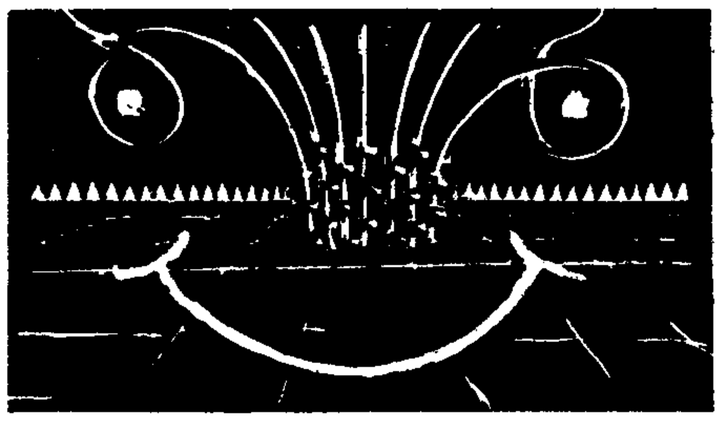
SALUTAMUS DONALDIO TRELFORDIO QUONDAM PIXI APPELATUS, EDITORIUS *OBSERVIO* CELEBRATO MULTIS ANNIS CIRCULATIO NOSEDIVUM NOTABILE ET TINI ROWLANDUS ARSLICANDI MAXIMUM ET IN SNOOKORIUM EXPERTUS ET VINO BIBENDUM MAGNUM ET POSTPRANDIUM SOMNOLENS FREQUENTATUS IN GARRICKA CON MULTI VECCIO BORENS ET RELATIONES TANGENTIALES CUM PAMELLA PULCHERRIMA LEGOVERA BORDES. MAXIME HONORI LAUDAMUS DOCTORUS LITTERATUS DISTINCTIS STUPIDUS PARVUS JERKUS PISSPOORUS SACKUM NUNC *(Hoc est satis Trelfordi. Ed.)*

John Cole on the Cabinet Reshuffle

Hondootedly Mossis Thotcher pavarotti nessun dorma ukelele lady tracker bar fox's glacier mints Neet of the Long Knives. Mossos Ongela Rombold mississippi mud pie Munuster for Wommin oleg katchaturian kung wa chung Political Hot Poteeto. Samovar mahabarata pepperonata quattro formaggio nostro azzuri Moster Deevid Mellor Moved Sideways. Reebok piper heidseck Moster Froncis Maude sergei rachmaninov Dramatic Recall coloraturo nutrasweet.

Pro Europe New Look baggio shillaci donnadoni edouard shevardnaze Moster Colin Moynihan Sorprise Step Op Giddy Heights of Energy pretty flamingo five four three two one hey moster tambourine man Election Ron Op New Faces Bolonced Team domenico scarlatti betty boop toblerone Bockbenchers Reassured carabinieri pistol-packin' momma No Place for Peter Bottomley *(contd page 94)*

DIARY



THE RT HON NEIL KINNOCK MP

That was a fabulous trip I had to the Unified States of America, really fabulous. Incredible, really. Fantastic. We drove up to the White House, huge place, really, in a big car — sizeable boot, four doors, electronic windows, little flag in front, the trimmings — and found ourselves shaking hands with the President of the Unified States, Mr George Bush, lovely man. Fan-bloody-tastic.

Of course, one has to dress up for these historic occasions, so I had brought over a couple of my best double-breasteds, leaving the final choice to that morning, depending on mood. Finally, I chose the one with the very slight flare, because I wanted to emphasis the Labour Party's modern, forward-looking approach. Cuffs, too, are important, I find, and I have my tailor pin on especially enlarged, detachable cuffs, so as to heighten my statesmanship. Finally, a tie. You can't meet the President without a tie, oh no, matey. I selected the Carmarthen and District Rugby Union Supporters Tie, as my advisers had informed me that Mr George Bush was something of a sporting fellow and I thought it might "break the ice". To be quite honest, perfectly frank and straight down the line with you, when the time came he didn't actually mention the tie, though he must have seen it. Odd really.

Talking of "breaking the ice", I'm a dab hand at it myself, and I soon got the President chuckling, I can tell you. As we were introduced and we were shaking hands and he was admiring my cuffs and my fabulous suit and so on, I said to him, I said "Your name's Bush, I take it", to which he replied that, yes, it was. "Well, George," I quipped, "back in Wales, we have an old saying, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the *Bush*'!!"

To be utterly open with you, the "quip" wasn't an instant success, but more of a slow burn. The President kept shaking my hand and smiling while he discreetly turned to his adviser and whispered out of the side of his mouth: "Get me a translator — fast."

"No need," I laughed. "Let me explain that little bit of a joke for you. You see, the word 'Bush' back in Britain means a little tree or shrub, usually green, or at any rate green-ish, and you know what a bird is, presumably..." And so I talked him through the "play on words", and by the end of it he was smiling hard. This left us with a clear ten minutes for defence policy, NATO, EMS and other major issues, which we both found more than enough, being busy men.

America. What a country, eh? Fabulous. Oddly enough, I discovered that the capital of America is not New York, as you'd expect, but Washington. I'm a bit of a trivia nut, as you can tell!

What a lovely lady Mrs Bush is, too, really lovely and very easy to talk to, I found. Again "breaking the ice", I said to her: "My wife, Glenys, is a great fan of your husband's early films." You see, you shouldn't spend all day talking international statesmanship, you've got to present a "human" side, especially to the lovely ladies. To be absolutely frank, Barbara — that's her Christian name, her surname being "Bush" like her husband's — looked a little blank before saying very nicely that she didn't realise her husband had actually made any films. Astonishing, eh? Here that lovely lady was, married to a guy who'd acted in, ooh, hundreds of great Westerns, and she had no idea. Anyway, I rattled off a few titles Glenys had particularly enjoyed, describing the odd scene from them as well — at one point getting Gerald Kaufmann, who was with me, to act the part of the Red Indian squaw — and she found it most informative. "I must try and catch up on them," she told me, delightedly, before leaving the room for an urgent appointment.

Talking of the EMS — that's the European Money Sentre — I've been attacking the Government on it and related issues with all the power, vigour and force at my disposal, and I've noticed, though I say it myself, that they've been quite taken aback by my command of the subject. What they don't realise — and I've been keeping it up my sleeve — is that my second best subject at school was Sums. Long division, multiplication, geography, distraction, you name it. So when you next see Maggie reel from one of my swift, fast, speedy, quick and instantaneous rapier blows, verbal punches or thrusts, you can think of the young Kinnock (that's me, folks!) doing his tables (eight sevens are fifty three, nine sevens are sixty two, etc, etc) at his old school desk in Bedwelty all those years ago. Amazing, really, when you think that without those sums I wouldn't be where I am today, ie, Leader of the Opposition!

It's taken a few thumps and one or two tears, I can tell you, but the Labour Party now has a coherent and adhesive set of policies with which to enter the next election. We are committed to Home Ownership. We are against Secondary Picketing. We are fully committed to Europe. We are in favour of competition. We are fully supportive of a sound nuclear defence policy. We see no value in the old dinosaurs of state monopolies. We have pledged our allegiance to the Royal Family and the wonderful traditions it represents. We can see no reason why the entrepreneur should be penalised for taking the initiative. We wish to work hand in hand with America. And yet still some people tell us that we are not a viable alternative to Thatcherism!

What a lovely, lovely guy Nelson Mandela is. Very warm and considerate gentleman, you can take it from me. Glenys and me had the great privilege — for that is what it was — of meeting the man himself on his recent visit to this country. It was a great thrill to sit with him in the Royal Box at Wembley for a truly magnificent evening of pop music. And do you know what he said to me at the end? He said: "I've always wanted to meet you. I'm one of your biggest fans." The great Mandela one of *my* biggest fans! I literally couldn't believe it! "Yes," added his charming wife, Winnie. "And he particularly likes your version of *Something In The Air Tonight* and all the early Genesis." Fabulous couple, really fabulous.

Max Madden, the Bradford West MP, *pictured*, didn't have much to chuckle about when he returned from Kashmir last week.

Representing the largest Kashmiri community in the country, he had some disturbing reports for locals after his visit, with genocide and torture allegedly commonplace out there.

But the MP did sigh with relief when he returned home because he had managed to survive a taxi-drive along a mountain-road at speeds of up to 1,000,000 mph.

Yorkshire Evening Post

JEREMY Sutcliffe has been promoted to news editor of THE TIMES EDUCATIOANAL SUPPLEMENT.

The News (Wapping House Mag)

Literary Review

Verse...and verser

All you who sleep tonight
Vikram Seth
(Faber, £11.99/£4.99)

THERE ARE not many authentic national characteristics, but one of them, perhaps, is the pronounced English distaste for poetry. The English don't *like* poetry, they really don't. They used to, of course. But then in the post-Prufrock period, when the ancient comforts of rhyme and metre disappeared and nobody could work out what anything meant anymore, they stopped.

Since then they have liked it occasionally but only if disguised in an unassuming, elegiac garment of Englishness (or what passes for Englishness) — unhistrionic and resolutely anti-intellectual. It is significant that the two most popular poets of the post-war era, Betjeman and Larkin, were really poets in spite of themselves, scared stiff lest anyone should accuse them of elevated thoughts and the elevated expression of them. After all, it's only *poetry* isn't it?

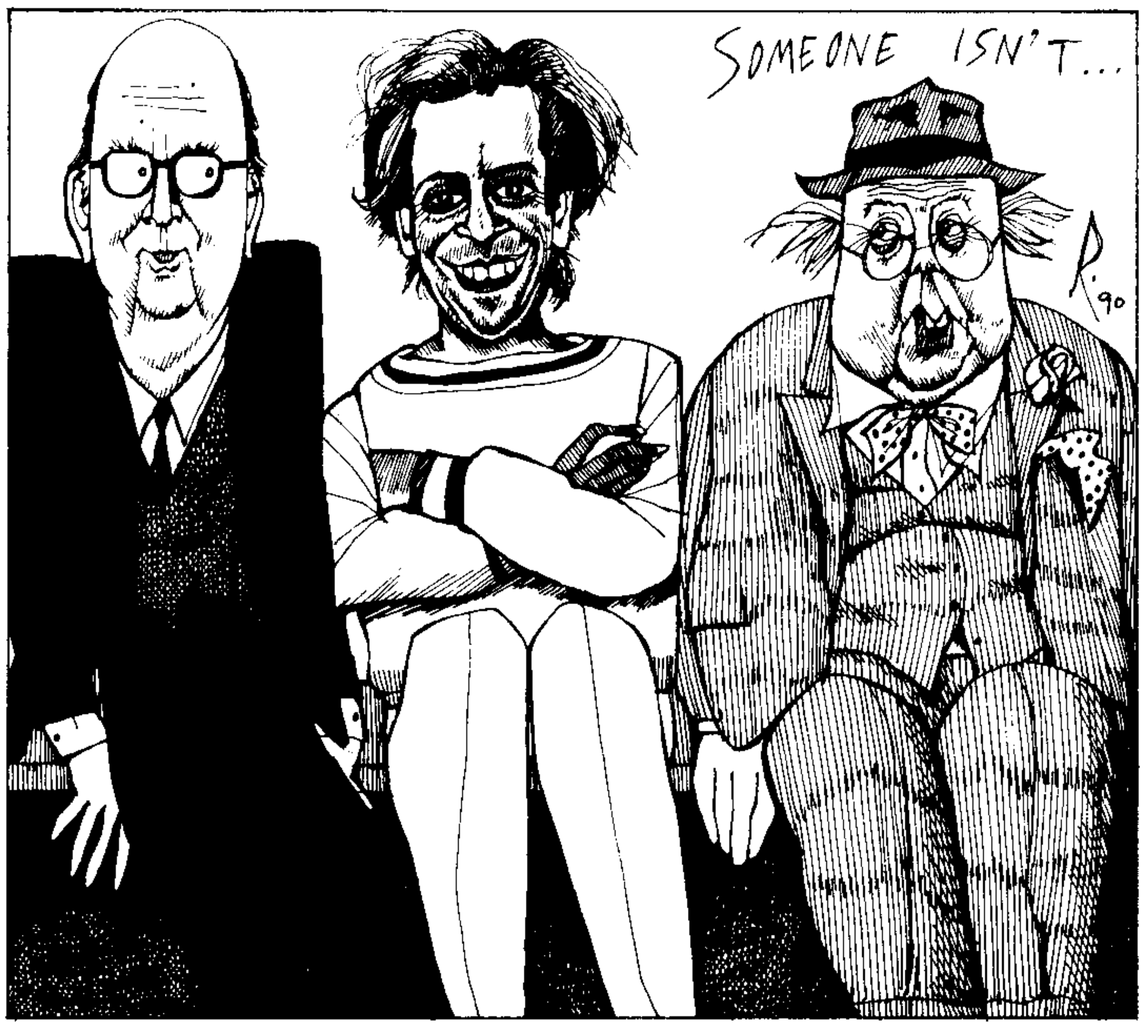
"What's wrong with a poem that rhymes?" "I'm sure it's very clever dear, but what does it *mean?*" In these and other sniffish put-downs lie the conventional response to modern English poetry, a response which it is very difficult to fault — most contemporary verse is spineless in the extreme. Amid this atmosphere of indifference mixed with grinding resentment, Vikram Seth looks like the answer to a traditionalists' prayer. He has clarity. He writes love poems in rhyming couplets. And with no Martian overkill — no women knitting described as plaiting spaghetti, no cunnilingus depicted as feeding yourself ambergris à la Craig Raine — he produces very simple and not unmoving accounts of human emotion. "Across these miles I wish you well/May nothing haunt your heart but sleep" goes a couplet in "Across" — charming, quite charming.

All you who sleep tonight comes four years after *The Golden Gate*, a hugely successful "novel in verse" which made Vikram Seth's name. It is a varied collection taking in love, travel and longer narratives spoken by fugitive "other voices". In it, according to the jacket, Seth "conveys his feelings with directness and clarity, and with the memorable use of rhyme and metre". No problems with the directness and clarity, well, not for the moment, but "memorable use of rhyme and metre"? Try these four lines:

A glass of tea; the moon
The frogs croak in the weeds
A bat wriggles down across
Gold disk to silver reeds

Taking a regular six-beat verse and then breaking its back in the third line ("wriggles") might just veer on the right side of imagination, but take this couplet:

Like stars that rise when the other has set
For years we two friends have not met



This is not "memorable" use of metre so much as a *wrong* use. Read it to yourself and you'll find it so irregular that the underlying rhythm scarcely exists. Worse than this, perhaps, is the vagueness of the phrasing. "Like stars that rise when the other has set". What Seth means is: "Like two stars, one of which rises when the other has set", but he can't be bothered to explain this. In fact, the charge of laziness hangs over the collection, detectable even in "Soon", a moving and regularly rhymed poem about AIDS whose continual degeneration into assonance — "God" rhyming with "good" and so on — suggests that the poet simply abandoned the attempt to find proper rhymes.

But it's perhaps the opening poem, "Round and round", which exposes the technical limitations. In it the poet imagines he sees an ex-girlfriend's bag in an airport carousel:

After a long and wretched flight
that stretched from daylight into night
Where babies wept and tempers shattered
And the plane lurched and whisky spattered...

I knew that bag. It must be hers
We hadn't met in seven years!

Several things conspire to destroy this: the banal rhymes within rhymes, that awful fourth line "the" which undermines the rhythm, and most of all the "hers/years" combination. Rather than reverting to a simple, chaste traditionalism — Betjeman, thou shouldst be living etc — Seth is actually aping the characteristics of a great deal of modern poetry, which is to say that he is ragbaggish, undisciplined and occasionally inept. Despite the odd evidences of charm, Auberon Waugh and the "save English poetry from barbarism" cheerleaders will have to look elsewhere.

Books & Bookmen

■ SALMAN Rushdie resolved, after the business of *The Satanic Verses* and its not being issued in paperback, never to be published again by Viking Penguin.

Solomon's agents and brokers' men, Andrew Wylie in New York and Gillon Aitken in London, agreed with the novelist that the most appropriate publisher for his next two books — a children's novel, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, and a collection of 72 reviews and pieces, *Imaginary Homeland* — would be Solomon's friend and fellow Indian, blue-blazered Sonny Mehta, chief editor of Random House's Knopf imprint in the States. This would make it possible for Sir Thomas Maschler of Jonathan Cape, also owned by Random House, to get Rushdie back, having been his publisher before he defected to Penguin with the troublesome book.

The plan backfired for two reasons. Alberto Vitale, godfather to Mehta and Maschler, decreed that no publishing house answerable to him would ever publish Solomon. By this time Sonny had written to his old chum suggesting that, between Indians, didn't he, Solomon, think he should tone down in *Haroun* some of the things he'd said about Kashmir in view of the area's current political problems?

The venerable but still not Nobel prizewinning author went berserk and commanded his agents to find a more respectful publisher. The two books were thus offered simultaneously to Bloomsbury (editorial director Liz Calder had been Solomon's publisher at Cape), Faber and Faber (whose Robert McCrum keeps making little speeches, reminding publishers to remember Solomon's predicament), Harvill Collins (because mad Christopher MacLehose has the best list of "foreign" fiction around) and, as a sop to the past, Viking Penguin.

Faber offered £115,000 for the two books; Bloomsbury £130,000; Harvill £150,000; and Penguin, whom nobody seriously believed would offer seriously, £500,000. Panic stations. Penguin under siege again. The lives of staff in danger once more from murderous fundamentalists even though the books are entirely inoffensive.

Someone then remembered that, along with Ladybird and Warne (Beatrix Potter), Viking Penguin owned bearded Bill Buford's *Granta* magazine, which published the occasional shavings from Solomon's workbench, and that Buford had recently, with the aid of Lucretia Stewart and ex-Miss Bloomsbury, Caroline Michel, begun to publish books and that they were very short of product.

So, Rushdie in Granta, the production, marketing and selling of Granta Books to be the responsibility of Penguin persons, and Salman Rushdie and Viking Penguin remain umbilically joined. Everybody unhappy.

□ DO AGENTS matter to authors? What can have induced Christopher Hope to depart from Caradoc King of A.P. Watt to the all-embracing bosom of Deborah Rogers? Even more so, what can have persuaded Timothy Mo to leave Deborah for, yes, Caradoc, especially as neither author wishes to change his British publisher?

'Bookworm'

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
I WARN YOU, SNIPCOCK — IF YOU SELL TO THE AMERICANS, YOUR ENTIRE QUALITY LIST WILL LEAVE
GET ME SOMEONE AMERICAN!

Electricity

A Hanson profit...

IT WOULD be easy to say of the current electricity fiasco "we told them so" (the *Eye*'s first forecast that it would be impossible to privatise the generating companies was on 4 March 1988). But it would be unfair to claim that the *Eye*, or anyone else, could have predicted just how farcical the saga would become.

The Government aimed to make electricity democratic by selling it off to the nation's hardworking share buyers. But by offering PowerGen in one package to Hanson, the giant conglomerate and generous Tory Party benefactor, it has now tacitly admitted it can't be done.

A second purpose was to expose the real cost of electricity by breaking up the Central Electricity Generating Board which had been suspected, rightly, of massaging the facts. But now, if Hanson takes over, the facts will disappear into the group's annual report covering everything from Imperial Tobacco to Consolidated Gold Fields and Hanson will be able to sell its own electricity to its own companies and adjust the charges more or less as it pleases, taking money from one pocket and putting it in another.

It will be difficult to isolate from the balance sheet what is being done in the electricity sector and environmentalists who had planned to buy shares to be able to put their point of view from the inside will be neutralised at the group's annual shareholders' meetings.

It is a tremendous blow to the Government's favourite intellectual thinkers at the Centre for Policy Studies who dreamed up the scheme as a way of ending the domination of a huge monopoly. And it makes nonsense of the hopes of one of the inventors, Professor Stephen Littlechild, who has been appointed director-general of Electricity Supply and who declared: "I firmly believe that the new arrangements are an important step towards a more liberal and competitive electricity market." Now might be a good time for him to consider returning to his post as head of the Department of Industrial Economics and Business Studies at Birmingham University to tell his students what it is like out there in the real world.

So why is the Government able to sell PowerGen to a company like Hanson, but unable to put it on the open market? The Government might just have been able to find enough Sids, institutions and wide boys who would buy and sell quickly, to allow it to get rid of PowerGen in an open market sale. What scuppered that was the discovery that it might not be able to find those well-known greasers, the underwriters.

These are the people who promise to buy shares which may stick on the market. They are used to offering their names and picking up their commission without spending a penny. But they were badly caught twice — over BP and Eurotunnel — and it came as a surprise to some of them that underwriting was anything more than a free gift.

So the word from the City this time was that its services would not be available: no underwriters. This could have been the moment for the Prime Minister to heed her own wisdom that "You can't buck the market". But she and John Wakeham, the energy secretary, decided that the credibility of privatisation — and a billion or so for the Treasury — mattered more.

At the last Tory Party conference Wakeham went on swearing that nuclear power would be included in the package for privatisation, right up to and including his speech. The very next day, or so he says, word reached him that it could not be and he pulled the nukes out. A wonderful coincidence. This year he is determined to get the Hanson offer in a positive form by the time the conference meets.

If the sale to Hanson comes off, it will be a blow to PowerGen's newly-appointed chairman, Robert Malpas, who had expected to be the No.1 and will be just another head of department. He comes from BP and so knows all about market flops and would have been an experienced operator if the sale had gone sour. Instead, he can be expected to move on.

Other losers will be anyone who thought privatisation would herald a new era of consumer protection. The role of protector had been given to the director-general who was supposed to combine running the supply of electricity with the counter role of protecting the public from bad service and high prices. Now at least there will be no grounds for pretending that it is all for the good of the electricity consumer.

Of course the operation may be intended to help the Government find an excuse for dropping the whole scheme — the day after the party conference, perhaps.

Coal

Playing the NUMbers Game

TWO of Arthur Scargill's dwindling band of loyal supporters can still be found in the north-east area of the NUM, where top officials David Hopper and David Guy believe their president still walks on water.

One reason for their commitment can be found in Annexe J, page seven, of QC Gavin Lightman's report into Scargill's amazing financial wheeler-dealing. Scargill described his wizardry as "teeming and lading".

Hopper and Guy were two beneficiaries of Scargill's genius with other people's money. Although Lightman does not name them, they were the two "area officials" who were given brand new cars only 11 months after the end of the coal strike in 1985.

Scargill had previously given them cars which belonged to former executive members Ken Toon and David Prendergast, dissidents who joined the breakaway UDM. Hopper and Guy spent a month driving them before they said they wanted a change as they were embarrassed being seen in "scab cars".

Scargill, who everybody now knows was handling millions of pounds of cash in various secret accounts "for international purposes and to maintain the fabric of the union", bought the new cars from a dealer in Barnsley. He paid in cash and when receivership ended five months after that, he returned to the dealer with a cheque drawn on an NUM bank account.

"But you have already bought them, Arthur," said the puzzled salesman.

"Yes, but now I want my cash back," said Scargill.

The dealer, not wanting to annoy the powerful NUM president, accepted the cheque and later handed over the cash. Lightman's report shows Scargill put this cash into his IMO account in Dublin eight months after the transaction.

Guy, Hopper, Scargill, the IMO and the garage were all happy; is the NUM?

The families who suffered during the year-long strike, particularly those in the north-east, must be really impressed by their leaders' financial enterprise in hiding the funds from the sequestrators and the receiver. The response to Scargill's next call for a national strike will be very interesting indeed.

MORE TALES from the NUM. Idwal Morgan, Henry Richardson and Gordon Butler all want the NUM's problems sorted out by the union with no outside interference.

Morgan took over his national position as cokemen's leader at the time of the coal strike and had to move from Wales to Barnsley. Unfortunately his predecessor was still in his house, bought by the union, and wished to stay put. The cokemen's area promptly bought another house, in cash, for Mr Morgan.

This transaction was perfectly in order and in keeping with the NUM's "perk" of buying houses for national officials.

Butler, the Derbyshire leader, is desperate for the quiet life now that his career has only three years to run. He does not want anything to ruin his "golden handshake" which other NEC members enjoy when they retire. These sums range from £30,000 to £40,000 and can always be found in spite of the union's sorry financial state. Butler has had enough trouble with the scandal regarding NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield's first house in Chesterfield, currently occupied by the deserted Betty Heathfield. Scargill attempted to make the Derbyshire area give the Heathfield's the house for nothing as a present to Peter for all his hard work on behalf of the NUM.

Derbyshire fought against this proposal and Scargill hounded the then Derbyshire president out of office for having the courage to stand up to him. Butler eventually sold the Heathfield house in Newbold Road to the national headquarters, at a knockdown price, when Scargill threatened to take the Derbyshire area to the high court.

Heathfield's "repairs", costing £13,000-plus, were in fact generous home improvements. Heathfield says he spent more than £10,000 of his own money on the house but Gavin Lightman could only find evidence of £5,000.

It will be interesting to see whether Heathfield, in line with custom and practice, gets his water, lighting, rates, etc, paid for by the NUM in his new love nest, occupied by Ms Sue Rolstone, and bought with the help of a £60,000 loan from the IMO as recently as last October.

Richardson, president of the Nottingham NUM, has Butler to thank for his office in Mansfield. Butler's generous area loaned Richardson £10,000 to set up his office after the split with the UDM in 1985. The transaction was carried out under the cloak of Oakedge Ltd, the NUM company which Scargill told Sheffield police he knew nothing about.

When outsiders and rank-and-file members ask the question: "Why is the NEC so soft on Scargill and Heathfield?" the answer is that "teeming and lading" is not exactly new.

PR

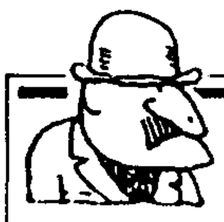
Expo-sed

HARD times for Burson-Marsteller, the fading public relations agency which, a few years back, ran the image enhancement account of Erich Honecker, as well as that of General Jorge Videla — a difficult job with a German dictator and an Argentinian torturer, but that's the business.

Through some piece of incompetence by the provincials who are trying to run Expo '92 in Seville, Burson-Marsteller was given a contract for it. The contract caused great ill-feeling in Andalusia, especially when Burson-Marsteller's boss said the Andalusians were all incompetent.

There is a growing move among London hacks to boycott any piece of paper put out on Expo '92 by the hype merchants. Hacks are also unhappy about a couple of majorly cocked-up press visits to the site of the world's fair.

Meanwhile the gloom in Seville about the firm has deepened now that it has been revealed that it is up to its neck in the business of "Nutrasweet", the artificial sweetener which may or may not be good for you.



In the City

NEWS THAT Lord Hanson has his eyes on PowerGen and all the tax breaks that go with its massive cash flow (all available at a giveaway £1.5 billion) will have been greeted less than ecstatically at the Inland Revenue.

Over the years Hanson Trust — now just Hanson — has proved a subject of active Revenue interest concerning the tax arrangements for legally sheltering its burgeoning profits. A year ago the taxman was locked in hand to hand combat with the Hanson accountants regarding more than £10 million which were in dispute. Hanson was seeking relief for interest it had paid on loans. The Revenue was — and may still be — disputing the tax allowability of the payments. At the heart of the dispute is understood to have been the Hanson practice of raising inter-group loans for UK subsidiaries from offshore companies. This is a not uncommon tax avoidance strategy. The Revenue looks closely at such legal arrangements as it may say that payments of interest to offshore companies, possibly in tax havens, amount to a distribution of profits and as such are not UK tax deductible.

Hanson is not alone in having such a rumble with the taxman. That other great Thatcher supporter, Rupert Murdoch, has also had disagreements in the past over the extent to which the profits of News International were reduced by interest payments on loans from overseas companies, often within the News group. After Revenue remonstrations, such avoidance arrangements were reduced and the amount of UK taxable profits increased, as did the amount of corporation tax.

Hanson has long shown a fondness for establishing companies in tax havens like the Channel Islands and Panama for holding group assets. Often these companies are UK resident for tax purposes designed for such deft wrinkles as avoiding stamp duty on the sale of assets. Such policies, though legal, do not make for winning friends at Somerset House. But then neither have Sir Gordon White's personal tax arrangements since he became a tax exile.

Just for the record, last year Hanson paid corporation tax of only £127 million on profits of £1.064 billion.

Meanwhile, back at the PowerGen pork barrel, the role of Hanson is all too familiar and explicable to followers of the business courtiers in the Thatcher circle. (Remember Hanson's £10 million helping hand by buying Westland shares?) According to sources close to Hanson, the way it all went down was this:

The Government, facing an uncertain stock market with a less than hot property, looked for a way to "ramp" the PowerGen price. Enter "Sir" Michael Richardson of Rothschilds, long-time Thatcher acolyte and adviser, recently rewarded for his words in her ear and trips to the opera at Glyndebourne as well as merchant banking. Richardson, or energy secretary John Wakeham, appear to have first raised the possibility with Hanson (advisers: Rothschilds) of making a bid. The initiative certainly did not — as ministers were keen to suggest — come from Hanson.

PowerGen is a typical Hanson deal, with one exception. It is a cash machine operating as a duopoly whose assets can be bought below real value; but it involves one factor Hanson always seeks to avoid — an industry overly government regulated. If Hanson wants to turn the lights off all over Britain, it does not want to have some politician or civil servant telling it to keep them on. And in particular it does not want to be in a situation where a Labour government, not in regular receipt of a £50,000-£100,000 annual stipend, might decide to dilute or dispossess its investment. So a heads I win big, tails I win even bigger deal was arranged.

Hanson would act as a "stalking horse" for the Government, declaring its intention to bid at up to £1.5 billion and so flush out other candidates who hopefully would pay more. Hanson could then step aside, taking with it an up to £15 million "sweetener" for services rendered, in the form of expenses/underwriting/commitment fee and, with luck, some guaranteed contracts to supply PowerGen with coal from its Peabody mines in the US (it's available at very competitive prices).

That is probably the preferred Hanson deal. But if no one else came forward, Hanson would takeover PowerGen and benefit from its cash flow, its tax breaks and its Peabody contracts until — or if — Labour came along and it was forced to hand the company back at cost.

Nice work if you can get it. And you can — if you are "one of us". Not so much sleaze as Downing Street business as usual.

THE Department of Timidity & Inaction is — perhaps not surprisingly — showing a certain reluctance to take advantage of Robert Miller's cooperative attitude regarding the life and times of Dunsdale Securities.

It has yet to interview Miller, despite the fact that he is not exactly hard to find having been in custody since his return from Brazil. Could it be that the DTI is not quite ready to hear full and frank details of how Dunsdale was operated for 10-plus years from 1977 while supposedly regulated by the self-same DTI?

After all, as Miller has made it clear what really happened to the £6-£7 million invested for non-existent Gilt deals, the question is certain to be raised in at least 200 clients' minds as to what the DTI and, from 1988, FIMBRA regulators were doing while this was all happening? (The answer can be written on the back of a postage stamp with room to spare.)

How was it they could not spot that Dunsdale was a circular money or Ponzi scheme? The answer could form the basis for a Barlow Clowes-style action and claims for compensation. (The £10 million balance from the alleged missing £17 million represents paper profits never actually made but credited to the gullible clients, some of whom may have invested undeclared and untaxed funds with Dunsdale.)

But while the DTI has been slow to move, the Serious Fraud Office has been very active. It has taken a large number of statements from Miller regarding Dunsdale. He has also been interviewed under the SFO's special powers, which compel answers regarding the share dealing activities of Gareth Robertson, Roland Cross and their circle of friendly stockbrokers. At the moment there is considerable debate as to whether the traditional fund manager "earner" of "front running" is illegal, and if so whether it is a matter for the SFO or, more likely, the DTI or the Stock Exchange.

QUERIES regarding the wish or ability of Hong Kong & Shanghai Banking Corporation to takeover the ailing Midland Bank owe much to HKSB's over-exposure to the all but bankrupt Alan Bond.

HKSB was an early Bond backer and at one time its exposure is estimated to have been more than $1 billion. This has since been reduced to an estimated $500-$750 million. Not surprisingly all is silent in Hong Kong as to who got the bank into this winner.

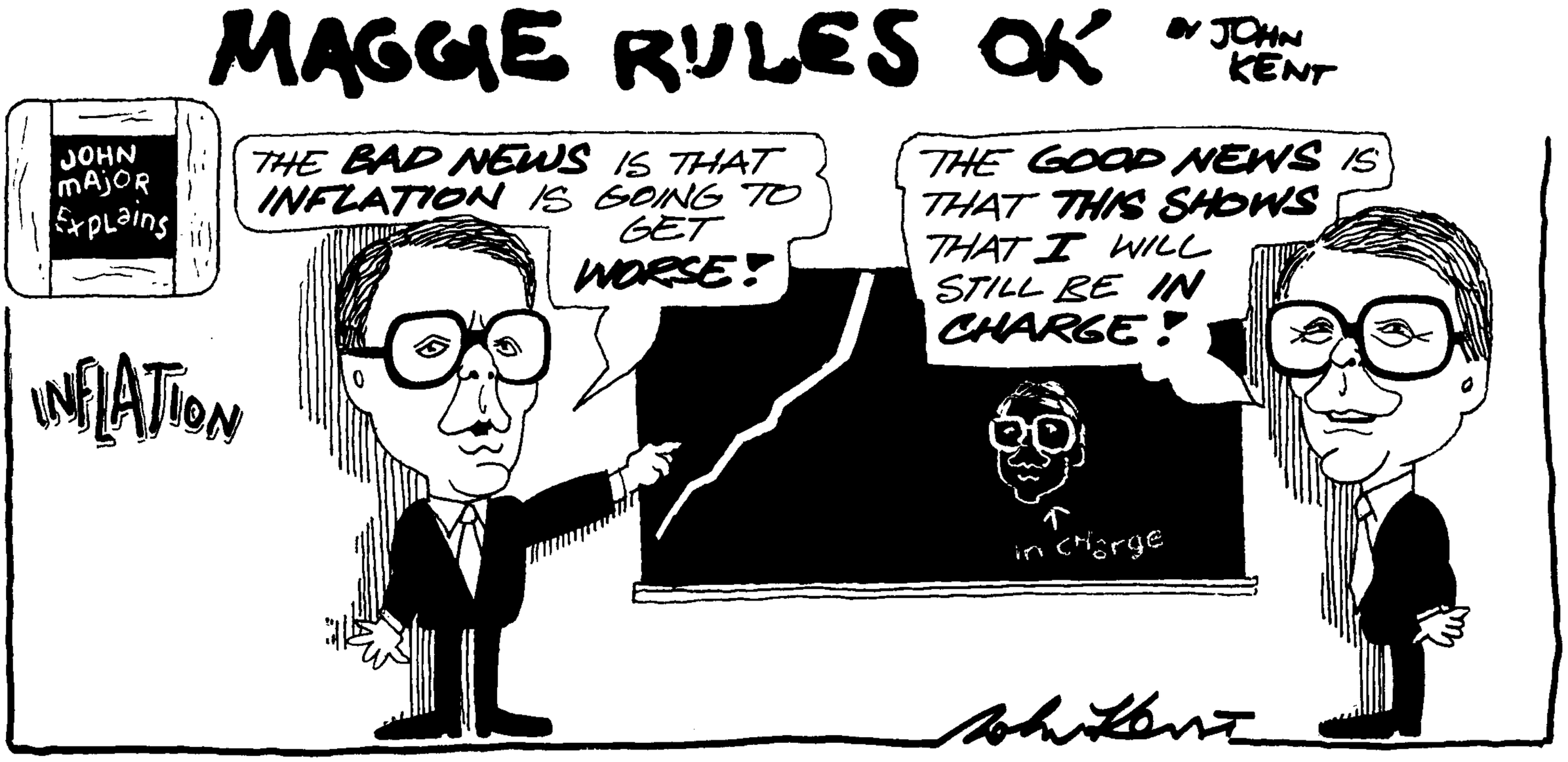
However, bank insiders recall that both former chairman Sir Michael Sandberg and his hand-picked successor William Purves were very close to Bond. Australians recall Purves turning up during Bond's unsuccessful 1986 defence of the America's Cup sporting a sweater and tie with the Bond logo. In London there are those who seem to think that even after he retired from the bank Sandberg was a regular visitor to the Bond offices in Piccadilly. It is hard to believe that such massive exposure by HKSB to a client who had almost sunk and been rescued by them once before could not have been agreed without the approval of the bank chairman and/or its top executives.

If Bond goes under it will be interesting to see who, if anyone, at HKSB takes the fall. When the bank took a £100 million-plus hit over George Tan and his Carrian group, similar questions were asked but not answered about large loans made to a major client with whom bank executives were perhaps a little too friendly or trusting. Sandberg survived Tan (unlike his co-director Ewan Launder). With Sandberg now gone, will Purves survive Bond?

FROM the You-can't-win-them-all department. On (appropriately) Friday 13 July, *Financial Weekly* confidently declared that the collapse of Parkfield Group shares was "unjustified" and recommended the preference shares which offered a "dazzling yield". Within a week Parkfield shares were suspended and the company had appointed administrators because of debts totalling £275 million.

Last September County NatWest sent out a highly positive "buy" recommendation to its clients for trade financiers Associated Henriques at 109p. It was a "money machine" about which the brokers said "we can confidently predict organic growth of 50 percent" in particular because "credit controls are very tight". On 17 July the shares were suspended at 46p. Cash flow problems had created a need for refinancing.

'Slicker'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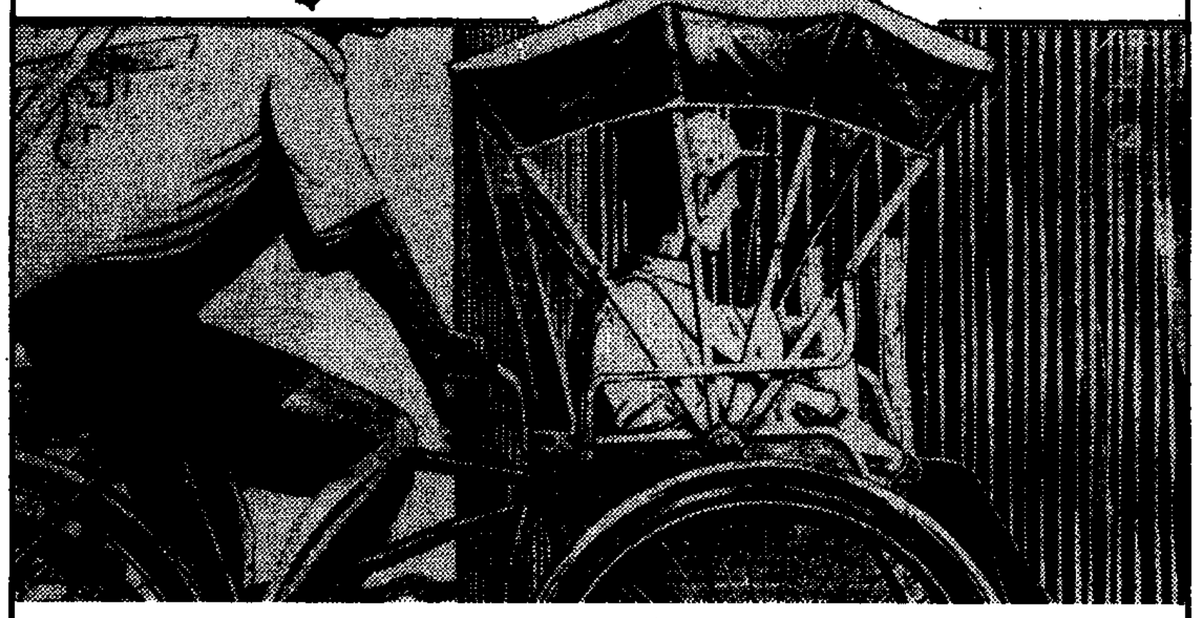

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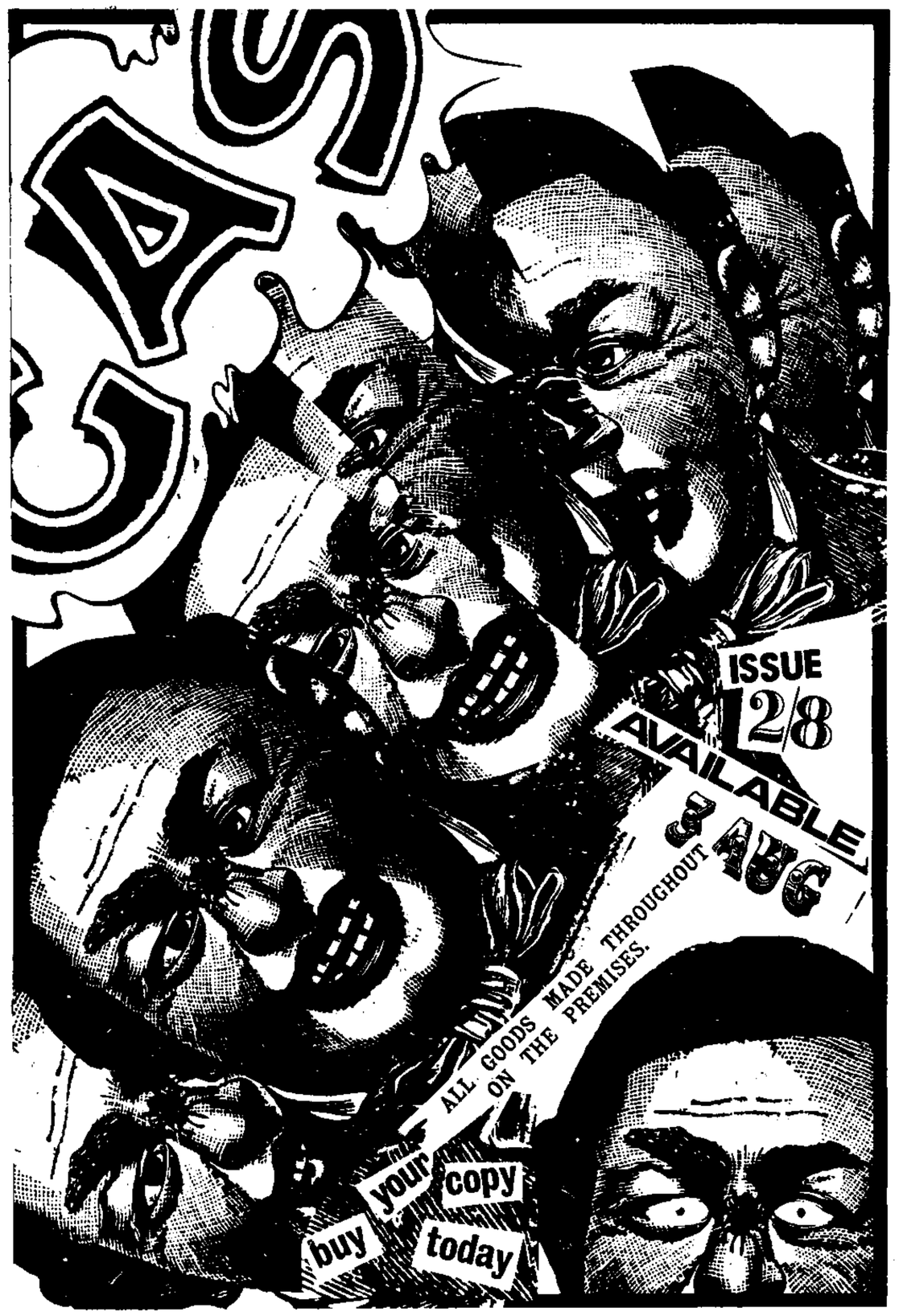

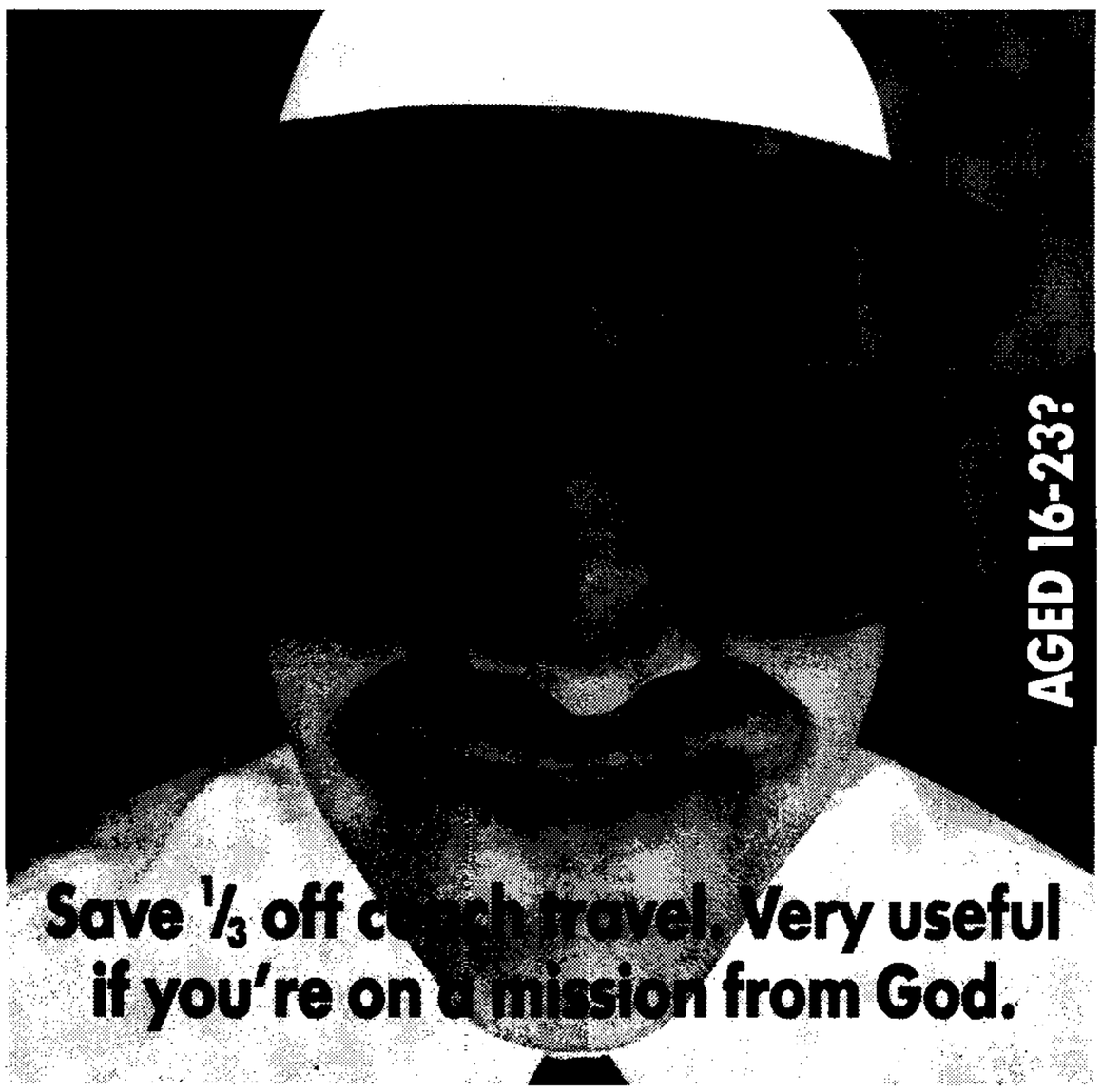

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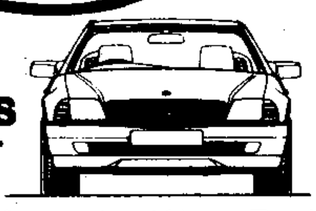

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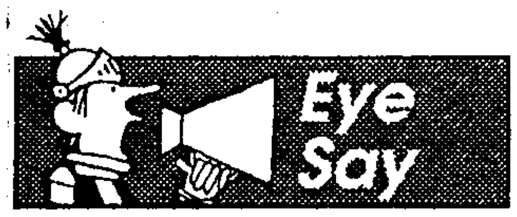

WELL DONE, KATE, Happy Birthday Chris, Jess and Mike... I'm speechless! G.A.C.

ROBERT ANTON WILSON. Does an English Appreciation Society exist? May I join? Box 1947.

LOBSTER — please send subscription details. Box 3447.

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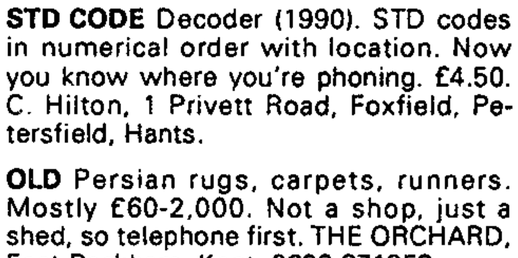

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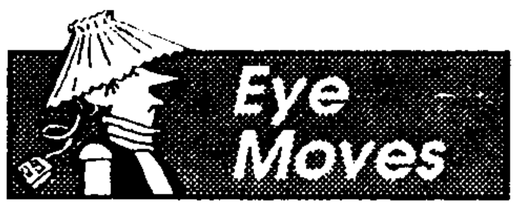

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SAILORS Captain ripped me off — return ticket Antigua — baby waiting. Splice your mainbrace, please. Box 2547.

I DESPERATELY NEED £8,500. 24 years old, extremely fit, good-looking, many skills. Anything considered. Box 2647.

DESPERATE and hopeful seeks £300 because the milkman left surplus cream and left. Please help. Box 2747.

JIMI! I want to learn guitar in States, need £18000. Gifts/offers gratefully accepted. Box 2847.

PHILOSOPHY student urgently requires £1500 to complete course. Anything considered. Box 2947.

TOTALLY undeserving case wants more money. Box 3047.

TRAPPED in Tooting. Dreaming of canal boat. Any donations. Guarantee poem. Box 3147.

FRIGHTENED ex-public school mother (boy 3, girl 1) urgently seeks assistance to buy small house and escape violent husband. Acknowledgment/thanks/details by return. Box 3247.

MULTI-RACIAL SCHOOL Box 47387, Parklands, South Africa, 2121.

YOUNG WOMAN desperately needs £6000. Please help. Box 3547.

SACKED due to illness. Huge debts. Help. Box 3647.

POOR STUDENT requires £250 to inter-rail Europe, visit Czechoslovakian girlfriend (have not seen for months). I'm heartbroken, please help! Box 3747.

MEDICI sought by talented, industrious sculptor/jeweller for enthusiastic patronage. Box 3847.

HELP! Illness, spiralling interest rates and a bereavement have landed me in debt. Desperate. Box 3947.

CCF APPEAL new offices now required, costs £82,500. All donations appreciated. Free Cancer Prevention sheet available. Donations (£5 - £30); crossed cheques made payable to D. Hall, Treasurer. Box 3245.

YOUNG MALE loves ladies. Needs money. Box 3646.

DESPERATE STUDENT needs cash. £2,000. Donations welcome. Box 5246.

CASH NEEDED by male 35, ex-public school, highly presentable, absolutely anything considered, confidentiality assured. London. Box 4047.

RECENTLY divorced male — having suffered severe career setback requires £750 to pull self up by bootstraps. Box 4147.

DESPERATE student needs £1000. Please help. Box 4247.

YOUNG, prospective missionaries need gift, home. Box 4347.

ACTRESS/MUSICIAN, 21, needs generous art-lover to sponsor her on experimental music-theatre course at Guildhall School, Barbican. Box 4447.

I'M SUFFERING chronic back pain. Money needed to convert bedroom to bedroom/office. Genuine. All letters acknowledged. Box 4547.

INDEBTED student requires £1500 to continue course. Any donations gratefully received. Box 4647.

SKINT! Underwater photography student desperately needs £3000 to complete unique course. Anything helps. Box 4747.

SINGLE MUM needs money to escape evil step-father. Please help us. Box 4847.

YOUNG "M'learned friend" needs £2500 to complete pupillage. Ta! Box 4947.

PLEASE HELP! Couple leaving Britain seek £3000 — urgently. Box 5047.

£2000 DEBT: skint student seeks solution. Box 5147.

POVERTY-STRICKEN comedian requires money. Will send original joke by return. Box 5247.

DESTITUTE student desperately seeks £3120.00 to repay loans. Box 5347.

YOUNG COUPLE being bled dry by ex-wife need money for deposit on small home. Last hope. Please help. Box 5447.

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MUSIC AND ARTS lover, professional man, 42, slim, fair hair, 5ft 8", London based, interests: theatre, classical music, opera, ballet, art galleries, historic buildings, country walks, best restaurants, seeks attractive lady, any age up to 35, any nationality, to share evenings out and weekends away. Box 10246.

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GOOD-LOOKING, wealthy businessman (39) dying slowly from terminal marriage seeks miracle cure. If you are in a similar situation and would like to be pampered please write with photograph if possible. Discretion assured. West Midlands/anywhere. Box 12043

SINGLE, tall, fair, thinking, humorous, sensitive, thin man, 38, with hair seeks similar warm, slimmish, sincere woman, 27/33. Kent/London. Box 15046.

NOTTINGHAM Tall professional (28) seeks stylish lady. Box 5647.

MIDDLE AGED Ferrari (43), (man)ual gearbox, seeks carefree liaisons with sleek sports model (la perla?), with very large energy absorbing bumpers (2). Colour scheme immaterial. Post 1965 registered please. Put stiletto heel marks on my headlining in London or Paris. Servicing with style and panache guaranteed. Humour essential, Box 5747.

IMPOSSIBLY intense, handsome and passionate English writer with homes US/UK seeks impossibly beautiful, intelligent and sensual young woman to love, bed and maybe wed. Photo essential. Box 5847.

FUN, FIT, FORTIES wealthy unattached Brit living in the USA but will spend most of the next 6/12 months in London/Sussex/Berks area. I'm 90% gentleman with champagne taste and seek a cultured, intelligent, independent, passionate and very attractive lady, say 27-37, with great sense of humour and zest for life for fun times and travel. Photo appreciated. Box 6447.

FRANCE August 19-27th. Man, 52, educated N/S seeks female travelling companion for leisurely sightseeing drive through Vezelay region. Share expenses. Preliminary meeting asap in London. Box 6547.

WANTED slim, intelligent, adventurous lady (25-45), single/married for romantic, caring involvement with attractive professional male, young-looking, 40ish, tied but celibate. Discretion and passion assured. Berks/Surrey. Box 6647.

LONDON WOMAN, 41, 5'7", slim, now single, likes pop and classical, walking, talking, laughing, eating, drinking, films, TV and radio. But believes personal compatibility more important than shared pastimes — and that's hard to know 'til we meet. Box 6747.

HUMOROUS, attractive, male graduate (36), boringly attached, seeks bright, fragrant lady for discrete romantic affair. SE/anywhere. Photo appreciated. Box 6847.

PROFESSIONAL LADY, 34, small, feminine, attractive with a lively and affectionate personality (single parent) seeks gentleman for sincere relationship. Must be single, under 40, attractive, good humoured, wealthy, educated and internationally travelled. NW preferred. Box 6947.

MALE, 21, requires older, experienced woman for nookie. Photo appreciated. Box 7047.

INEXPERIENCED 21 year old male seeks older woman over 35 for fun/friendship. Photo appreciated. Surrey/London. Box 7147.

ASIAN GIRL (26), seeking farmer. Box 5947.

A LADY needs a holiday and would love an invitation to be taken away from it all. Suggestions to Box 6047.

EXTREMELY WEALTHY businessman in his forties, but believes that he is as young as the woman he feels, desperately seeking slim, 20 to 30 year old to enjoy the good life and a 1 to 1 relationship. Box 6147.

WEARY London male journalist, 30, seeks humorous female 25-35 for help with major rewrite job on life. Box 6247.

MALE, 50, fit, able to travel anywhere UK, seeks female beautician for regular all over treatment. Box 6347.

ATTRACTIVE, relaxed, interesting, outward lady (40) loves sport, the arts, countryside, holidays and more. Seeks well-educated, successful, good-looking, unattached man for obvious reasons. London/Home Counties. Box 7247.

PROFESSIONAL MAN 42, separated, fit and attractive, seeks sensitive, lustful relationship with similar woman, N London, Herts, Essex. Phone No/pic appreciated. Box 7347.

WANTED! Nymphomaniac 20-50 — reward professional 31. London/Yorkshire/anywhere. Phone number. Box 7447.

YOUNG 50 YEAR OLD male, tall, slim, articulate, non-smoking professional. Own hair and teeth. Seeks honest, friendly, female to share fun and socialising. Photo welcomed. Box 7547.

MALE, 26, gentle, warm, humorous, likes doing things and going to places I don't go/do on my own. Seeks female prepared to share a bit of her life. Suddenly I need to cuddle someone. Appreciate photo. Sussex/Surrey. Box 7747.

PROFESSIONAL MAN 43, nice looking, educated, witty, seeking younger lady for discreet and loyal occasional friendship. Can be very generous if need be. Married lady preferably. This is wholly genuine. Reply with photo please in complete confidentiality. Need arises from sick wife. Class unimportant if a real lady. Box 7847.

REMARKABLE MAN, 40, is definitely not looking for another selfish bitch, however beautiful. Any suggestions? Box 7947.

SLIM, ATTRACTIVE, caring, intelligent, affluent, virile male, seeks slim, passionate female for caring but non-possessive liaison. Hospitality London; holidays abroad. Box 8047.

GLASGOW GRADUATE male, 34, fond of the outdoor life, would like to meet pretty, funny, intelligent female. Serious relationship, fun or both. Box 8147.

6FT, INTELLIGENT slim, blue-eyed, slightly loopy Aquarian male spider (24), web in Basingstoke, seeks slim compatible/understanding bluebottle (22-30). Likes pubs, conversation. London, etc. Box 8247.

VIVACIOUS, charming female (34) with great sense of humour, seeks unattached male (30's). Photo appreciated. Box 8347.

DIRECTOR, 55, 6ft 4in recently returned to London SW3 would like to meet lady under 45. Box 8447.

MALE 45 Alan Bates lookalike, I'm told, (sorry Batesy) seeks stunning, sensual, 30 something lady to be proud of. Maybe share unusual house and overdraft in Surrey countryside? Box 12047.

GOOD-LOOKING architect-historian, 33, would like to form a durable relationship with a pretty female artist/designer. Letter please. Box 12147.

ATTRACTIVE, casual tennis player, male 33, seeks attractive, casual female opponent for long, close-fought game. Details of current ranking would assist. Box 12247.

ATTRACTIVE, London professional man with comfortable income, 33, seeks intelligent, pretty woman, 25-33, preferably creative but not essential. Letter please. Box 12347.

HANDSOME MAN, 33, seeks busty, pretty young woman with enthusiasm for art. Photo and letter please. Box 12447.

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MIDDLE-AGED professional male seeks non-smoking female to share occasional discreet weekday mutually satisfying "escapes". London/SE. Box 12747.

BASICALLY CONTENT but bored wife/mistress sought for discreet long term relationship by similarly placed husband alone in London during the week. I am a tall affluent 46 year old company director; you should be a vivacious 30-45 year old who likes a champagne life-style and has a good sense of humour. All replies answered in complete secrecy. Box 12847.

GOOD-HUMOURED tall, dark, blue-eyed Scorpio, 42, business professional seeks uncomplicated relationship with outgoing lady. Yorkshire. Box 7647.

UGANDA CALLING, seriously though, successful SW1 male, 6', blond, suntanned, 43 considered good-looking seeks happy, attractive young woman, 23-35. Box 9947.

DARK, HANDSOME!? Amusing, considerate, professional artist, 27, seeks warm, passionate lady, 25-45 for snogging, cuddling, horseplay. All letters answered. Address essential. Norfolk area. Box 10047.

GOOD-LOOKING, fun-loving man, who wishes to become a househusband seeks relationship with attractive wealthy woman. Box 10147.

SEMI-DETACHED male, 27, seeks slim female 20-35, for fun and romance. I love the countryside, food, laughter, beer and naughties (any order). Box 10247.

WE'RE IN OUR PRIME! Blonde and brunette, two intelligent, independent, assertive, attractive ladies, 30's, seek tall, professional, successful, interesting, single gentlemen, SW. Letters, photo. Box 10347.

SHY, GRADUATE male (34) seeks happy girl for shared sunshine holiday. South-East. Box 10447.

GRADUATE (25) seeks intelligent, honest, single man (25-35). Durham area. Box 10547.

SMILING, faithful fellow (30) wants good woman for love, friendship, sex and so forth. Photo appreciated. Reply assured. Box 10647.

EDIBLE post-graduate male, 27, seeks nubile, intelligent nymphomaniac for strip chess (photo). Box 10747.

WARWICKSHIRE/LONDON female graduate, petite, feminine Francophile. Desires sexy, youngish (40's/early 50's) male to share interesting leisure pursuits. Permanent relationship?? Box 10847.

ATTRACTIVE girl Friday wanted to join talented artist (42) escape from rat-race to cottage-smallholding on habited island just off beautiful SW coast of Eire. Knowledge of small boats/outboards an advantage. Box 10947.

AGEING BIMBO seeks male equivalent! Seriously, I'm 36, bright, blonde — a journalist. You are 35-43, bright, attractive (dark-haired?) into cinema, theatre, music. London. Photo appreciated. Box 11047.

DARK TOM looking for purring puss 20-40. Photo assures reply, discretion assured. Box 11147.

MALE GRADUATE, 25, unattached, varied interests, prefers countryside to city, red wine to white, and jazz to opera, seeks warm, attractive female to share experience of life, love and laughter. Photo appreciated. Bucks/anywhere. Box 11247.

ATTRACTIVE (JUST), lively minded has-been, 49, seeks relaxed, intelligent man, over mid-fifties for culture vulturing, etc. London/Surrey. Box 11347.

WONDERFUL and single? Professional male, 35, is looking for a lady who would like to have children, family life. Box 11447.

UNTAMED, intelligent female seeks witty and adventurous male. South Coast. Box 11547.

NAUGHTY married man, 30's, seeks girlfriend. I am kind, affectionate, tall and slim. You are attractive, broad-minded, with a good figure. Live in Swindon/Reading. Discreet long term liaison sought. Box 11647.

TIME TRAVELLER from 1957, male, seeks female partner on quest to prove there's more to life than poll tax forms and world cup. Must enjoy music, travel, reading. Own teeth preferable! Photo appreciated. South-East area. Box 11747.

PROFESSIONAL MALE graduate, 45, no ties, seeks sociable, good humoured, tolerant lady who doesn't mind sharing with plants, music, art and good wine, not necessarily in that order. North West. Box 9747.

GREAT VIEW from the window, looking to share it with lively, bright lady. I'm 32, divorced and unattached. No Aquarians. Steve xx. Box 9847.

BUSINESS WOMAN, tall, unattached, early 40's, seeks business man, tall, unattached, attractive, affluent, 40-60, N/S, with humorous personality, for genuine, happy, sincere relationship. Worcs/Warks/Staffs/Salop. Photo appreciated with letter. Box 11847.

FEMALE OUTDOOR TYPE seeks like-minded man (35-45) to share the view. I'm 34, non-smoker, reasonably slim and attractive, graduate, freelance graphic designer; own home, car, canoe, bike, skis and running shoes! I also enjoy a little "culture", travel and dining out. Looking for a long-term relationship. Bristol and Southern England preferred. Photo appreciated. Box 11947.

SINCERE, solvent, attractive businessman, late 40's, seeks companion/mistress for long-term, caring relationship. ALA. Phone number appreciated. Box 13047.

INJECT some sparkle into summer; handsome athletic male, 29, single, seeks clever female, 19+, to enjoy July to September. Like me, you want to share laughter, warmth and tender embraces. Cambridge, but mobile. Long letter and photo preferred. ALA. Box 8547.

MALE 28 articulate, well-travelled seeks healthy heterosexual female. North Devon. Box 8647.

OFFSHORE MANAGER, 28, energetic and intelligent, seeking female friend with similar traits for carefree trysts in off duty hours. Recent photo reciprocated. East Anglia area. Box 8747.

SINGLE MAN (33) seeks peaceful, loving female for mutual life enhancement. Photo appreciated. Box 8847.

PROFESSIONAL MALE (40's), single again for too long needs outgoing, attractive, N/S, petite lady in her 30's for fun and possible long term relationship. London/Surrey/Hants. Photo appreciated! Box 8947.

BANKER but not boring, early 30's, eligible, reasonably attractive but tending towards workaholism seeks female who will tempt him into more social activities. She will be too interesting to be described in a paragraph but will have a mind of her own and wish to meet someone new who is interesting (and has good references!). Photo appreciated. London area. Box 9047.

CHARMING, vivacious female, 34, with great sense of humour would like to meet unattached, interesting man, 30's. Photo appreciated. London-based. Box 9147.

FAT MAN, late thirties, glasses, moustache, not good-looking, but humorous, kind and reasonably rich. Bored of eating good dinners alone seeks tolerant lady companion. London area. Box 9247.

POVERTY-STRICKEN 6'3" male nurse, 36, seeks tall, attractive, well-dressed female, minimum 5'8" under 40. Objective: mutual admiration and bed rest. No nurses. Berkshire/London area. Box 9347.

RANDY MALE undergraduate seeks older woman. Box 9447.

CUTEISH Surrey graduate (22) seeking Mrs Robinson bonkin. Box 9547.

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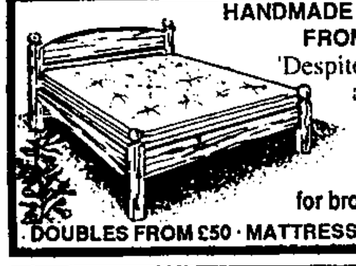

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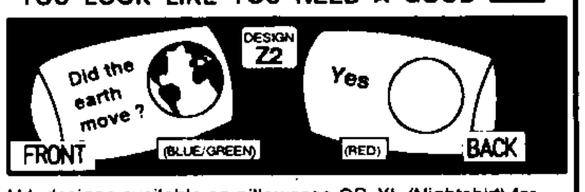

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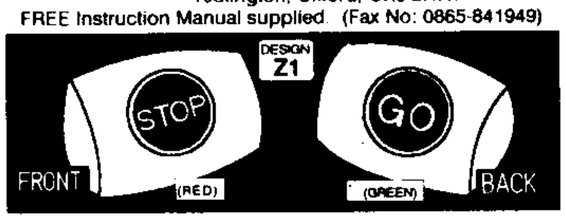

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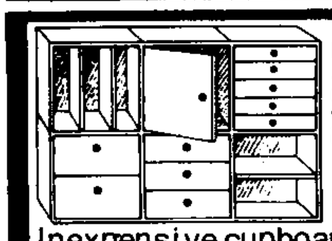

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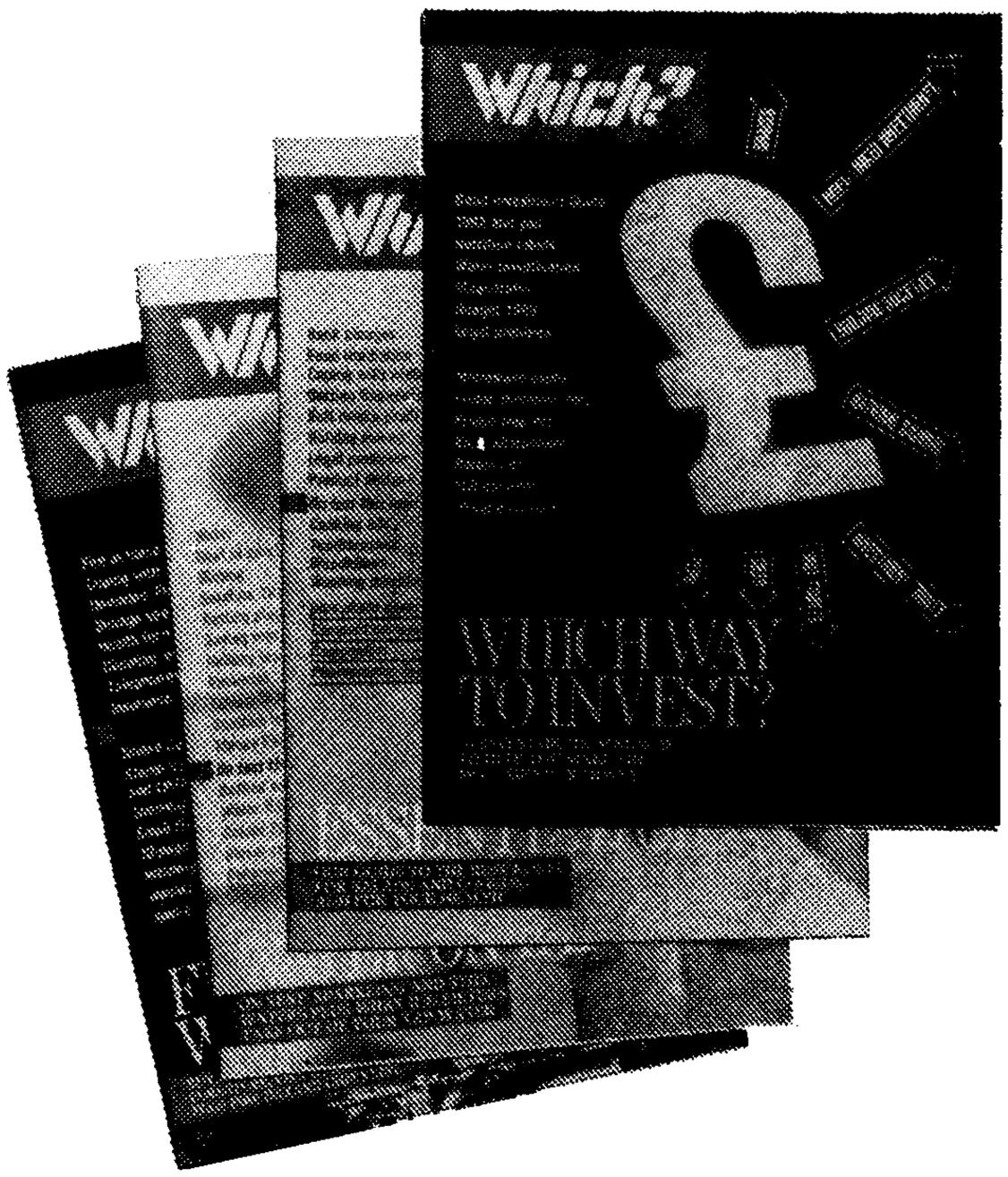

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